ETON IN THE 'SEVENTIES

HON. GILBERT COLERIDGE

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ETON IN THE 'SEVENTIES

THE AUTHOR

By "THE WIRER"

ETON
IN THE 'SEVENTIES

BY

HON. GILBERT COLERIDGE
AUTHOR OF "AN INSTINCTIVE CRIMINAL"
"JAN VAN ELSELO," ETC.

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PREFACE

A PREFACE is commonly an apology, a mode of giving thanks, or a vehicle for the self-laudation of the writer. While endeavouring to avoid the last, I shall hope to confine myself to the first two characteristics of a preface.

The publication some few years ago of *Eton in the 'Forties*, by my cousin, Mr. Arthur Duke Coleridge, set me wondering whether something similar might not be done for the "'Seventies," since nothing had then been written on that period.

During the preparation of my notes, however, *Eton under Hornby*, by "O. E.," appeared, which seemed to convey a somewhat one-sided view of the Eton of that time, and, where it was not amusingly anecdotal, savoured too much of the Doctrinaire and the Socialist, and I was encouraged to persevere in order that future generations might not form the opinion that we were as bad as "O. E." makes out.

Indeed I see no reason why each decade should not have its history forming a valuable link in the

chronicles of our School. The human boy is always interesting; the period of growth when the mental sap is rising, when physical beauty is at its highest, when tastes are being formed, lifelong friendships are being made, must always have its charm. We are none of us so blasé or world-weary, I hope, as not to wish to have it all over again. Therefore when each decade comes along with its fashions, its point of view, its humours, and its childlike tragedies, let us have a "trivial, fond record" of it from someone, however inadequately told.

Be it remembered that this volume does not attempt at being historic, like Major Gambier Parry's *Evans's*, or Mr. Brinsley Richards' *Seven Years at Eton:* it merely aims at recording stray impressions left upon the mind of the writer by his school life.

While I have endeavoured to verify and get authority for a good many statements in the following pages, there are still some which are based on that frail foundation, my own memory. Walter Bagehot says, "it is wise to be suspicious of aged reminiscents, they are like persons entrusted with untold gold; there is no check on what they tell us." I have undertaken this at an age which will provoke no such suspicion, for I am far enough from the events to have partially forgotten them, and not far enough for

invention to supply their place. Human memory is a strange thing. Here is an instance :

When I was an undergraduate at Oxford an accident occurred to me near the top of Mont Blanc in which I nearly lost my life. We slipped, all three of us, and fell about 200 feet from the Bosses du Dromadaire on the Courmayeur side of the mountain, and had exceeding difficulty in getting out of our position with only one ice axe. Naturally this made a great impression on me at the time, and one would have thought that the impression would have been indelible and permanent. But after the lapse of some twenty years, whenever I was tempted to relate the story of my escape, a strange haze came over the picture, and though, like an actor on the stage, I was word-perfect, a horrible feeling stole over me that the incident had never occurred at all, and that I was inventing the whole thing. I always gallantly persevered, on the ground that it was the story I had always told, and that there must be some element of truth in it. Quite recently, however, my character has been restored to my conscience and all doubt removed by the evidence of the guide who was with me at the time, which has satisfied me that the event did actually take place. " 'They are a pack of liars, I believe,' said Trim. 'They are somehow or other

deceived in this matter,' said my Uncle Toby." If I cannot find a guide to substantiate my statements, may I hope that Uncle Toby's view will be taken of my inaccuracies? So much for the apology.

To those who have helped me I owe a cordial debt of gratitude. The contributions added by Earl Curzon of Kedleston, Mr. A. C. Benson, and Mr. B. Thomson speak for themselves, and betoken the genuine interest of the writers in their old School, as well as their kindness to myself. The volume would indeed have been meagre without them.

As regards cricket, and other subjects with which I am incompetent to deal, the assistance of the present Headmaster, Mr. Edward Lyttelton, and that of Mr. C. M. Smith, both Captains of the Eleven in the 'Seventies, has been priceless, and contains an authority quite unquestioned.

Many others have helped me by letter, and by word of mouth, including Mr. F. Warre Cornish, the Vice-Provost, Mr. R. G. Seton, Mr. C. Granville Kekewich, Dr. H. P. Cholmeley, Mr. H. W. Page Phillips, Mr. O. Goodman, and the present master, Mr. Lionel S. R. Byrne, and many with whom it has been a pleasure to correspond. My thanks are also due to the Editor and Proprietors of the *Nineteenth Century and After*

for their permission to republish the chapter on the Fourth of June.

Finally, I dedicate this little attempt to throw a reminiscent light on a period which, to us who lived in it, contained certain picturesque qualities of its own and features of abiding interest, to the old School that I love, in the hope that it may cause my readers some little pleasure to remember the days of their youth.

"Forsan et hæc olim meminisse juvabit!"

G. C.

September 1912.

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ETON IN THE 'SEVENTIES

CHAPTER I

ON GOING TO SCHOOL

"A man should make a compact with his memory, not to remember everything."—BENJAMIN JOWETT.

THE most remarkable day in a boy's life is that on which he goes to a public school, and he is happy if he has been to a private school beforehand, for then he knows to a certain extent what to expect. I had that advantage, but it did not certainly divest the event of its strangeness, and when my mother took me to Eton, for my father had far too much work to spare the time to take me himself, I felt like a raw recruit marched out to his first battle. The platform at Paddington is indelibly impressed on my memory, the great engine with its huge single driving-wheel, the hustle of the porters, the groups of parents with other sulky-looking boys, for boys are apt to look sulky in the presence of the unknown; and when I saw a bigger boy than usual, I wondered whether he

would be in the same house or form and bully me, for I had some little experience that way at a private school, little regarding the fact that they were mostly new boys like myself.

There was an unwritten law, like that which used to apply to barristers on circuit in the old days, whereby no Eton boy would dream of travelling to or from Eton in any other than a first-class carriage ; it dated back to the time when the snobbery of the age laid down certain things which a "gentleman" could not do, when his career was restricted to what were called the "gentlemanly professions," and when his conduct was very much hide-bound by custom. Consequently, of course, we travelled first-class. It was in the palmy days of the reign of the tall hat, when no person, who considered himself anybody, would have dreamed of being seen in London, or any capital, for that matter, without that badge of respectability adorning his head, and I live in the certain hope that when that curiously inconvenient and sleek-looking headgear passes out of fashion altogether, it will remain fossilised, as it were, at Eton, like the Blue-Coat costume, to show us what a gentleman really ought to look like. "I first saw Randolph Churchill at Eton," says Lord Rosebery, "a small boy in an extremely disreputable hat. Now, the hat was at Eton in those days almost

as notable a sign of condition as among the Spanish nobility."

My tall hat, fresh from a band-box, shone with a beautiful polish, like the ephemeral glories of a short-lived insect, pressing on my unaccustomed brow with the weight of newly-assumed respectability, and I wondered how long it would retain its original sheen. It did not last long, for my first attempt to polish it was by brushing it the wrong way, then it was for ever bumping against obstructions, being knocked down and rolled on the floor, and in a few days it was sat on and reduced to the proper pulpy condition of a hat of a lower-boy "scug." Some years after, when I was half-way up the school, my father used to complain in my presence to strangers, for my special benefit, of a bill for nine hats in one half that he had had to pay for me. It was idle for me to plead that Johnny Lock, the mathematical master, had sat on my hat by mistake in school, that what my father called hats were mostly flannel caps, representing new colours acquired by transference from one boat to another, and that you must have a decorated straw for the 4th of June. My explanations were always brushed aside, and these Eton extravagances always quoted against me, and my answer that these nine head-coverings lasted me a long time treated as a

mere youthful excuse. Besides, it made a good story and sounded so probable.

The important question of the exact time when a boy should discard the jacket and assume a tail coat was optional, though there was a feeling that when a boy rose to a certain height in the school he should don the more manly garment. I think I remember, amongst others, Hawke, and also Sir Malby Crofton, both of whom sported precocious whiskers, wearing "tails" when lower boys, and also Bertie, son of Lord Abingdon, remaining in jackets till he was quite high in the fifth form, but these were exceptions. The psychological moment arrived, and suddenly the youth appeared at Sunday morning chapel all glorious in a tail coat. But the stick-up collar was a matter of individual assumption. That came when a boy had reached a certain position of dignity, not necessarily a swell, but something approaching to it, so when your fag-master donned stick-ups you treated him with greater awe. He probably would soon begin to carry his umbrella reversed at a point about six inches from the point and swing the handle near the ground, and this custom marked a further rise in dignity. At one time no lower boy would be seen in a great-coat, either in school or in chapel, however cold the weather might be, and yet he would put it on to watch

a football match! Then suddenly, no one knew why, all lower boys appeared in greatcoats, but none would venture to turn up his collar, obedient to the unwritten law that only swells could do such a thing.

But the most remarkable taboo was established after I left. No small boy dared walk in High Street on the side opposite the Christopher Hotel; he might cross the street to make a purchase, but not walk there, and I remember the horror expressed by a lower boy, whom I visited some years ago, when I suggested walking back on that side. "I can't tell you why," he said, "but it simply can't be done."

Fashion spreads like wild-fire among boys as among women, only one would be curious to know the origin of such a custom. It cannot be that any big boy, or set of big boys, ever enforced a practice so ridiculous. It happens that "Tap" is on the popular side of the street. Can it be that the juniors imitated the way of the swells towards the good things of this life, till a well-worn track became established, like that of ants to a fortuitous carrion? Similar unwritten laws were soon assimilated by the small boy and accepted without question, and without a thought of their absurdity. But to return.

On arrival at the house there were many introductions, to "my tutor," a frail-looking, kindly man, with

short speech, couched in a low tone, and long pauses in between, tending to make one very shy at a first interview; to his wife, who talked much concerning things above our heads, but who, at all events, kept things going; then to "my dame," a large dark person, who, to a newcomer, looked uncommonly severe, though afterwards we soon discovered her blind side, and found her most convenient when our school obligations had ponded up too much; and, lastly, to each other. We prowled round each other like strange dogs, sniffing out our characters by blunt questions shyly answered, saying anything rather than appear sulky, feeling ill-at-ease all the time, and wondering whether it was to be a sworn friendship, armed neutrality, or bitter hostility in the future. Then came the distraction of purchases "up town": a bath bought at famine price at the ironmonger's, a rug, which exists now, and the black-and-blue ringed cap worn by the humble Etonian till the honour of "colours" of some sort was bestowed on him, and other necessary articles at Sanders & Brown, now W.V.B.; then, after "lock-up," a tender farewell, and lastly, an endeavour to settle in to, what appeared to a boy accustomed to a dormitory, the cramped loneliness of your room. I was fortunate in having next me one Andrew Colvile, son of Sir James, the judge,

a boy of the sweetest character and gentle humour, and we immediately became messmates and inseparable chums. Our friendship, however, was all too short, for, after battling bravely for about two years against a weakly constitution, he was carried away by consumption, to the profound regret of all who knew him.

My first fag-master, "Ginger" Keating, so called from the hue of his hair, happened also to be of judicial origin, and I had good reason to be impressed with the fact when I was sent for one day to be introduced to his father, Sir Henry, the judge, a benevolent-faced man with side whiskers, "so tall he almost touched the sky" he seemed to me, and after some kindly remarks I was dismissed, joyful with a sovereign nestling in the palm of my hand. The man who forgets a tip given him in his school-days deserves a horse-whipping.

It was a great deal more important to the lower boy *who* chose him as fag-master, than what master he was "up to" in school, for the former had unlimited opportunities for tyranny, twice a day at least, viz. at breakfast and at tea. This power, however, was seldom abused, and was a salutary discipline to the fag, especially if he had just previously been "cock" of a private school. Although there was a tradition that a fag had once been sent on a useless

expedition to get a piece of moss from the "copper horse" at the end of the Long Walk in Windsor Park, our excursions seldom exceeded a hurried journey to Brown's, opposite chapel, to fetch six hot buttered buns enclosed in a paper bag, those buns to be delivered still hot enough to melt more butter to be added on arrival; or to Brown, past Barnes Pool Bridge, for bacon, eggs, or sausages; or to Barnes Brown or Webber's for the same. Old Barnes Brown's carving of ham was a masterpiece of skill which still lingers in the memory. The way in which he wielded his long whippy knife was worthy of a fencer in his prime. Slices came out of that circular excavation thin as a sheet of paper, and this made a sometimes inferior ham just palatable.

Then there was the breakfast to be cooked, which was a most valuable accomplishment. It is no bad thing for a man to know how a breakfast should be cooked. The right way to stir porridge, how much you should spike a sausage with a fork before frying, the right amount of butter, the proper moment when to transfer the shining luscious morsel to the plate, was by no means useless knowledge. I take it that the man who can poach an egg without breaking the yolk is a more complete being than one who cannot. There was always an incentive to cook well, because in a mess

well furnished with fags some did the fetching and carrying and others did the cooking, and he who did not fetch and carry with expedition was promptly told to turn his back on his master and receive a kick or so on that part of his body where it ceases to be called "back," as the French say. A slipper, or if the fag-master was possessed of that badge of ineffable superiority, a cane, applied smartly to the tight trouser of a bent figure was a sufficient incentive to efficient carrying and cooking. A fag of mine, now a noble lord, being told to cook some sausages, boiled them and served them up, a sorry-looking dish. Being loth to administer corporal punishment for any but serious derelictions, I am ashamed to confess that I made him eat them in my presence, a species of torture worthy of the Middle Ages. It is a thousand pities that this educational fagging at breakfast has been abolished, on the main ground that the fags had insufficient time for their own breakfast before morning chapel; there is no reason why chapel should not have been fixed at a later hour; and certainly this slight grounding in the culinary art has been of great value to Etonians in wild districts. It is quite true we were rushed over our breakfast, and it remains to the lasting credit of my tutor that he was the first who started giving the small boys their breakfast,

so as to save them the time and trouble in cooking it.

Curiosity is the proverbial attribute of youth, consequently it was necessary to make a clean breast of one's past during the first few days at school. Whenever I showed my face in the street, I was swooped upon, chiefly by those who were not very far advanced from new-boyhood, and questioned in a peremptory tone as to my antecedents. "What's your name?" "Coleridge." "Where do you board?" "Cornish's." "Any relation to the Fellow?" "Yes, great-nephew." "Damned small nephew"; then a smack, or a kick, which my native instinct showed me how to avoid. "What's you father?" was a constant query, and when I replied with strict accuracy, "Solicitor-General," the lower-boy intellect not having grasped the true dignity of the law, the retort was, "Petti-fogging solicitor," "confounded lawyer," or some such epithet picked up from prejudiced parents, and then came a series of skilled avoidances on my part.

A story is told of an Etonian, now a distinguished man, to whom were administered the usual interrogatories. "What's your name?" "Smith." "What's your father?" "Bookseller." (Scornfully) "Anything else?" "Yes. First Lord of the

Admiralty." It is not recorded what punishment followed this confession.

In the 'seventies my tutor's was the house which divides Common Lane from Durnford's passage. The three-gabled front which faces Weston's yard and the wall must be respectably old, for when I occupied, during my last year, the corner room on the first floor next the new schools, I discovered a name and date, somewhere in the seventeenth century, carved on my door, and nearly obliterated by numerous coats of paint, but the rest of the house, occupied by the majority of us, was oppressively modern and correspondingly ugly. Our rooms were narrow and high, with ventilators over the doors, and these we soon stuffed up with paper to prevent any lights after hours being seen in the passage. The walls were thin and unsubstantial, and frequently communication was established between room and room by means of a red-hot poker. A hole once made, hostilities began with pea-shooters, squirts, and other engines of destruction. I once received some ink in the eye from a squirt, which nearly blinded me. Ink on the collar and other places was frequently displayed by lower-boy "squits," as very small boys were called, resulting from battles in which quill pens were used in the manner of ancient siege slings, but after the first

year or so our battles became cleaner, save for an occasional bloody nose. My claret ran easily, and in the one serious fight that I ever had with one named Langton, who had stolen my Latin grammar, although I managed to black his eye with great success and to put him to flight, my nose bled for hours afterwards, and I believe I suffered the worse of the two. Since the 'forties, the usual battle-ground had changed from the corner by the school wall to the hallowed precincts of the cloisters, and I remember a historic contest between one Bruce and another taking place there; several rounds were fought, and the noise of the pugilists and their backers roused the old Bishop of Colombo, one of the Fellows, from his studies. Rushing forth from his door with eyes half closed, he plunged in to try to separate the combatants, and received one or two accidental and certainly unmerited blows. The sight of a venerable Bishop being pommelled by both parties was such an outrage on the spectators' sense of decency, that they interfered and stopped the fight. We did not stay to hear the indignant episcopal lecture delivered by old Chapman to our retreating figures.

CHAPTER II

THE LOWER BOY

"One of the great differences between childhood and manhood is that we come to like our work more than our play."—W. H. LECKY.

IT is recorded that in the 'forties some of the boys kept dogs, a practice which was winked at by the authorities. I do not recollect anyone keeping a dog in the 'seventies, but many of us kept other pets. My room, during the first year or so, was a kind of menagerie, including at various times a dormouse, a squirrel, a slow-worm, which disappeared mysteriously after a few days' confinement in a hat-box; stag-beetles, kept in a drawer and fed most biliously on brown sugar, on the advice given me by Fisher the shopman up town; several birds, goldfish, newts, a miller's thumb, sticklebacks, caddis worms, water-boatmen, and a tortoise.

Sometimes I went into school with my dormouse in the pocket of my jacket, a material interruption to my studies. A few books standing on end formed a temporary kraal within which he took his exercise,

and from which he escaped when in an active mood, and had to be speedily retrieved before he should be seen by the master. On one occasion I was stumbling over a saying-lesson straight in front of Lovett Cameron, and the mouse climbed out of my pocket on to my shoulder. Cameron was a kindly man, and, on my promising not to repeat the offence, let me off the impending *pœna*. After this the mouse's excursions had to be confined to the picture cords and curtains of my room.

Originally I hung my gold-fish in a glass bowl, suspended by a string, at the open window, that they might get the benefit of the sunshine. This was too great a temptation to "Mad 'Unt," son of Ward Hunt, First Lord of the Admiralty, who lived opposite at Rouse's, and he slung a stone at the bowl with a catapult, and when I returned to my room I found the fish with gaping gills flapping on the floor. Missiles from Rouse's caused no surprise in those days. The purchase of a new bowl was too great a strain on my finances at the time, so I kept the fish in my basin, transferring them to the teapot whenever I washed.

My tortoise I kept in my window-box, where he could bask and eat green food. He was a foolish beast, for he fell into the street below, so I bored a hole in his shell near the tail, and tethered him with

a piece of string, trusting in his good sense not to fall over again, but he never learnt wisdom. Day after day would I find him suspended head downwards, helplessly waving his legs in the air. The brain of a tortoise, like its movements, is very slow and irresponsive, and I often wondered whether he felt any gratitude to me for the precautions I took for his safety. This reminds me of the story of Sydney Smith, who, when asked by a child whether, if a tortoise was stroked on the back, it would be pleased, responded: "Why, you might as well scratch the dome of St. Paul's to please the Dean and Chapter!"

The rooms where we carried on our studies were under the arches of School Yard. They were gaunt, bare, and dusty. There were no desks, only seats, and we had to balance our books on our knees. The diamond-paned windows gave on the wall, and this led to much inattention, as we all took an intelligent interest in what went on in the street. If a four-in-hand passed by with a merry warning from the horn it took Mr. Cameron all his time to keep us to the point.

School Yard brings us to the bed-rock of things. There we would con the rudiments of grammar and syntax to the last minute before entering school. Doggerel rhymes in the Latin grammar, such as

"Common are to either sex *artifex* and *opifex*," would be hurriedly committed to memory, and those of us who felt secure of remembering the task would while away a few minutes with an old blackened fives' ball between the buttresses of chapel on the first primeval fives' court, whence the mysteries of "Pepper-box" and "Dead Man's Hole" originated. A family tradition that my grandfather[1] had been "keeper of the fives" in his day made those well-worn, uneven flagstones hallowed ground to me. Those grimy arches and pillars which support Upper School, worn by time, and carved by the knives of successive generations, how old and solid they seemed to us then, mighty as the legs of Atlas! For, owing to some inscrutable law of development, things appear larger and more imposing to the child than to the man, the clear-cut impression on the young mind is magnified by the memory and so decorated by Romance that the man, on revisiting the scenes of his boyhood, is almost staggered to find how small they are.

The procession of gowned giants, who at eleven-o'clock school filed into "Chambers," that council of the gods, or thirty tyrants, whichever we chose to regard them, were really ordinary-sized mortals. What they talked about was an object of endless

[1] John Taylor Coleridge, afterwards puisne judge.

first summer half. A very dark cloud came up as we were waiting for school, and we were standing in groups under the arches to shelter from the rain, when a flash of lightning, avoiding the pinnacles of Chapel, those of Lupton's Tower, and even the metal statue of our Founder in the centre, came down into the Yard, zig-zagged along the ground between us and the statue, and lost itself by the rain-pipe in the corner by Lower School. It made one report like a great cannon, and so blinded us that none of us could see to construe when we went into school; at least this was taken as an excuse by the benevolent Cameron.

One of the trials of a lower boy was to play in the House game. We shared a football field with Austen Leigh's beyond the railway arches, to which in flood time we had to wade across "Philippi," and even when there were no floods the small boy rarely crossed the shallow stream without being pushed off the plank bridge; the old bird always went first or last. The game consisted of about twenty or more a side, in which the lower boy scarcely ever had a chance of touching the ball, and very often he got severe kicks in the loose bullies by getting in the way of bigger boys. But "kickabout" was a great institution, in which the future "behind" practised his long kicks.

You purchased a ball from fat Powell, had your name inscribed in large letters thereon, and used it at kick-about, and for passage football at my tutor's. School kickabout was generally held in South Meadow, between three and five o'clock school. The big fellows occupied the centre of an open crowd, about eighty to one hundred yards in diameter, from which innumerable balls were shot into the air like rockets, making a noise like distant independent firing. If a small boy returned his kicks with accuracy, taking his volleys and half-volleys with judgment, he was spotted at once for "short" or "long-behind." However, it was one thing to return a ball well at kickabout, but quite another not to miss it when charged by an opponent in a game. There were some "long-behinds" who invariably managed to kick you as well as the ball whenever you charged them—they were the brilliant and uncertain ones—but you might charge a hundred times into the massive frame of L. Bury, you might be kicked off your feet into the air, and the ball would be between you and his toe; if he kicked the ball before you reached him, the swing of the leg was checked like the spent string of a bow, and you never felt his foot. I would hazard an opinion that he was the best "behind" at Eton in the 'seventies, and I do not forget J. E. C. Welldon at the wall game.

It was an ancient custom that, on Founder's Day, Cornish's should play Austen Leigh's at the Wall before breakfast. Except to those mighty possessors of Oppidan Wall or Mixed Wall caps, I cannot say the match gave unmixed joy. We had empty stomachs, the game was strange, and whenever the ball got loose it developed into a shinning match between the two houses, in which I never failed to receive marks, and we usually returned to my tutor's hungry, with tempers roused, and aching with bruises. It was a foolish way of commemorating our pious Founder, and I still think that football before breakfast is a delusion and a snare.

In very bad weather, or when floods prevented access to our field, we were allowed to play passage football in the house, which was a kind of miniature wall game; but my tutor discouraged passage kick-about—to no purpose, however, for it flourished continuously in my time. The fellow who occupied the end room had a noisy time of it, for his door perpetually resounded with the thud of the ball. Suddenly a cry of "tutor" would be raised, and the passage become vacant as if by magic and a dead silence pervade the place, and only perhaps a football left on the floor gently rolling itself to rest to denote what had been going on. This he would confiscate by way of "*spolia*

opima." But his triumphs were of short duration, for we all knew where he kept the loot, and raided it back afterwards after a decent interval. The gas-brackets suffered frequently from this game, and I remember one being partially broken and some fool trying to find the origin of the smell with a match, which resulted in an explosion and a roaring flame a foot long. According to modern notions of safety we lived in daily danger of being burnt in our beds, for the staircases and passages were all made of wood, and we slept in wooden cupboard beds, inside which it was the custom to stick a candle-end fixed in its own grease on a bracket, and by this illicit torch we read at night. In many cases the woodwork bore traces, in the shape of blackened patches, of flames hastily extinguished in the nick of time, and yet by good fortune there was never a serious fire. The lamentable tragedy at Mr. Kindersley's at a later date has happily stirred the authorities to adopt every means for the prevention of fire, so now the danger is reduced to a minimum.

To return to the lower boy. However oppressed he may be by strict fag-masters, however harassed by exacting "beaks" who refuse unreasonably to recognise the claims of other "beaks" to his work, however battered in Big House games, his horizon is

ever full of hope. The time when he will get his house colours, go into tails, or assume "stick-ups," or whatever article of apparel denotes for the time being the outward mark of a swell, may seem to him æons ahead; nevertheless, as each half passes away, the giants disappear and smaller heroes take their place, the very furniture imperceptibly grows smaller, and a day is not far distant when nonsense verses and derivations shall be things of the past. In this microcosm of an Eton world, a step, like that of promotion from the Organ Room to Big Chapel, assumes enormous proportions, and marks an epoch in his career, and he begins to feel that with decent luck all things are possible.

CHAPTER III

COLLEGE CHAPEL

"A certain amount of Christianity is necessary for the ordinary man if he is not to become dangerous to human society."—BISMARCK.

ETON COLLEGE CHAPEL! The very words suggest memories, to some solemn and grave, to others a mere phantasmagoria of boyhood, an ocean of close-cropped heads and white collars, a pyramid of tall hats in the ante-chapel; to others some snatch of sacrilegious humour as hauntingly insistent as a jingle on the liturgy. As two artists may sit side by side and produce two totally different pictures from the same landscape, so no two memories of Chapel by Etonians will be the same; but a memory of some kind, tinged by the religion and romance of our youth, must certainly remain fast with us, and we shall carry it to the grave. When well on the road to that terminus to our existence we revisit the place, and sit in the stalls and survey the new faces around us, we are almost startled by the permanence of the mechanism of custom. There is the same disorderly order in which the boys gain their places, the surpliced "Tugs"

occupy the same seats, the same hushed pause before the stage entrance of the Sixth Form, that self-conscious swagger of youth under which true modesty is often veiled, that stately march of titanic heroes whose lightest word makes lower boys tremble, that carelessly assumed gait doing duty as a mask of character which deceives few, for many of us used to declare that we could always tell what a fellow was like by the way he walked up Chapel. As Charles Reade says, " There is an animal in creation of no great merit, but it has the eye of a hawk for affectation. It is called a boy." And sometimes a tiny straggler, who has run breathless from his tutor's, will find himself, like a small pinnace, wedged in among this procession of huge warships—wishing he were invisible and could slink to his place unseen—while the Sixth Former behind him marches on in superb ignorance of his existence, like a lion unconscious of a beetle in the road. Then come the choir and clergy, who walk like ordinary mortals, and lastly the Provost. There are the masters " in desk," in their accustomed seats, upheaved like promontories over the sea of heads, and we wonder whether they are still as short-sighted as they used to be. Our mind inevitably wanders back into the past and endeavours to reconstruct the " old familiar faces," and we seem to hear

the thud of the organ-pump vibrating like a distant flail as a preliminary to one of Joe Barnby's big chords, while old "Thunderguts," the big bass, showed how low he could go when he "varnished into dost."

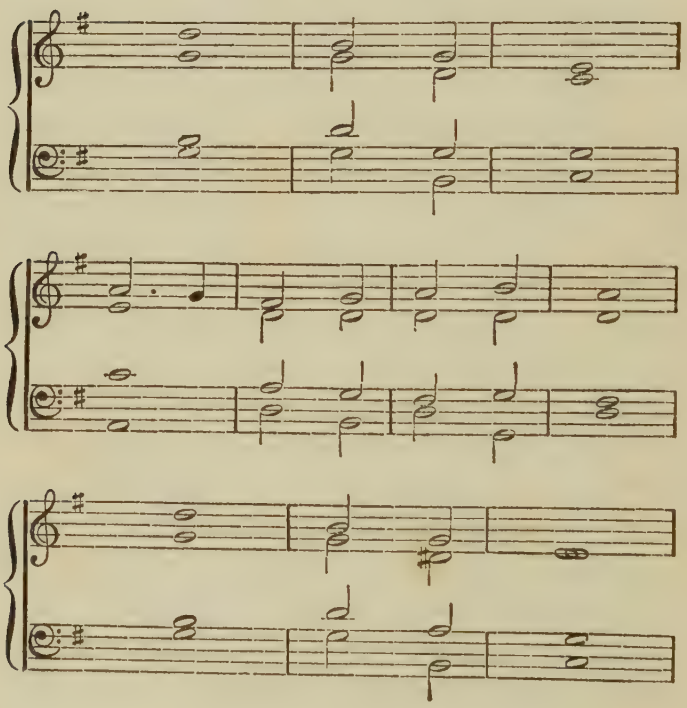
In those days it was not considered necessary that the choir should have organised help, such aid as we lent being very spontaneous. By chance it happened that four basses, all members of the Musical Society, sat near or next each other—Tennant to the right, Sandeman, the "Σάνδαιμαν ἐνόρμους" of one of J. K. Stephen's poems in the *Chronicle*, on the left, and J. C. B. Eastwood at no great distance—and when we knew a tune we shouted it, but if we did not know it we were silent; there was no moderation in our praises, till at last expostulations reached us from high quarters.

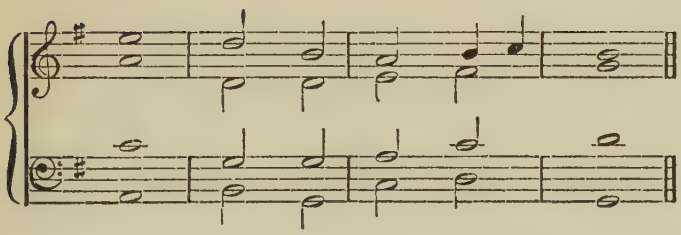
The heartiness of our services sometimes approached, if not transgressed, the borders of irreverence, for there was a custom dating from time immemorial that whenever the 136th Psalm was sung at Evening Prayer the choir should be allowed to sing the first part of each verse alone, and the last part, "*For His mercy endureth for ever*," was then shouted by the whole school, culminating in a still more stentorian addition to the chorus of "*Sehon the King of the Amorites and Og the King of Basan.*" The old double

chant, ending in a martial cadence, lent itself to this robust, and perhaps somewhat rowdy, interpretation. At last the head master, Dr. Hornby, and Joseph Barnby laid a deep plot to overthrow this time-honoured habit, and to our dismay the organ started a new chant, Gregorian in its simplicity, and utterly unsuited to the triumphant words of the Psalmist. We were fairly cornered; we stared open-mouthed at each other in wonder at the audacity of the authorities, while the choir, regretting in their hearts, I am sure, the loss of the old chant, went tamely on their course with suppressed smiles. But custom dies hard, and, after a few verses, the old tune surged up from the mass of boys and did battle with the new, and, I am sorry to say, a most irreverent pandemonium ensued. The waves of discord rose higher and higher, while it was doubtful which chant would gain the victory, till the organ came to the rescue of the choir with its heavy artillery of big stops. There was nothing to be done against such odds, and though the fire was returned with vigour from time to time from various entrenchments, notably the distant heights of the altar steps, the choir triumphed in the end. If this had happened in Keate's time there is no doubt the whole school would have been flogged, but since we had a milder and more diplomatic head master

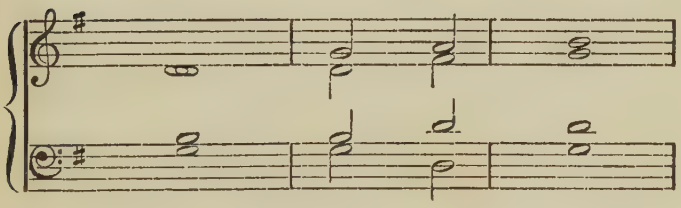
we heard no more about it. When next the 136th Psalm came to be sung, the older and more turbulent adherents to tradition had left the school, and the new tune was adopted without a murmur. We still regret that the old chant is not resuscitated, for it has a noble refrain. Here are the two chants :—

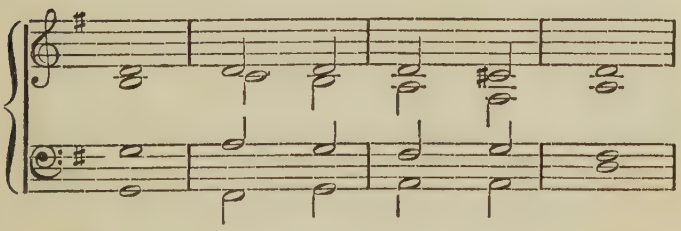
PSALM 136 (*28th Evening*)

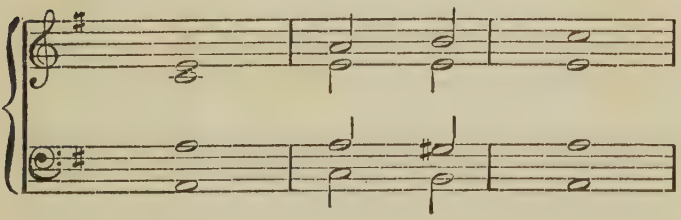


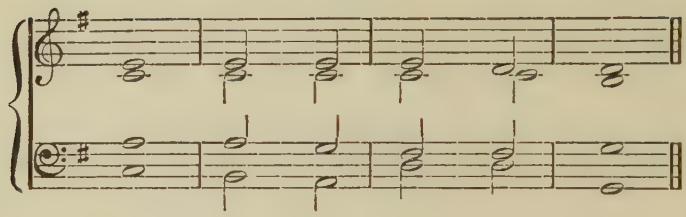


PSALM 136 BARNBY.









On looking round the chapel we miss the additional surplices, surmounted by the venerable white heads of the Fellows, who used to support the Provost in the stalls at the west end, a body now swept away by the spirit of reform. There may have been abuses, and they certainly were not good preachers, but these old pillars of scholasticism gave an air of ripe antiquity to the place, and the spectacle of an aged pedagogue spending the evening of his days in the cloistered shelter of his Alma Mater was not an unedifying one. We now see these seats filled by ordinary unrobed persons instead of the stately Balston; Edward Coleridge, "the Arnold of Eton," as his old pupil, Goldwin Smith, calls him in his reminiscences; Bishop Chapman, in the diaphanous panoply of lawn sleeves; and the princely John Wilder, to whom the chapel owes so much, although modern taste is perhaps impatient of the colouring of some of the windows.

One is fain to remember also the quaint figure of

THE "COGGER"

By LESLIE WARD

Provost Goodford, the "Cogger," crossing School Yard from Lupton's Tower, hugging his umbrella to his shoulder, as depicted in *Vanity Fair*. He used to say that he never carried it in that way, but his family caught him one day red-handed. A breakfast at the Provost's Lodge was a feast at which a shy boy was soon put at ease by the kindliness of his host, and, could he have done so, I believe he would have invited the whole school. He had one defect; his sermons were long, with one exception, and that was under the following circumstances: He had been preaching for some ten minutes, and was just warming to his subject when, after a slight pause, he began the next sentence with the words, "And now—" At these welcome words the whole school rose to their feet in a flutter of pleasure, to the bewilderment of the preacher, who for a moment was at a loss to understand what was expected of him, but the hint so broadly given was not to be neglected, and he finished the sentence in the way we wished, cutting his sermon short. The moral of it is that we must have been listening most attentively to his discourse. There is no doubt that he was careful never again to begin a sentence with those two magic words. Our feelings were expressed by a writer in the *Etonian* in June 1875:

"At the magic words 'And now'
Runs a tremor through the hall.
Joy awakes on every brow,
Sleep is cast away from all;

And the crowd with heads erect
Wake like birds by sunbeams kiss'd,
And this is why a certain sect
Is sometimes termed 'Revivalist.'"

Mr. Lyttelton writes: "In announcing a coming celebration of the Holy Communion, Provost Goodford thought it his duty to read the whole of the Exhortation, 'because the Rubric told him to!' His breath was scanty and his voice weak, so the performance was the reverse of edifying, especially as the congregation was standing and couldn't hear a word. But once in about fifteen times he would stop at the usual place, about seven lines from the start; only if he once went on to the next word, 'Wherefore,' pronounced 'Wuffaw' very shortly, we knew we were in for the whole, and our audible groan was heard through the building, as every boy sank back from expectancy to a listless leaning attitude if there was any 'coign of vantage' where any portion of his person might rest."

An old schoolmaster is not necessarily the fittest person to preach to boys, and so Edward Coleridge, when he came into residence, started the innovation of inviting strangers to preach to us; thus, by his means,

we were able to listen occasionally to men like Canons Farrar, Liddon, Wilberforce, Scott Holland, and Bishop Temple, and these we were glad to hear, not only because they were new voices, but because they were good preachers. When the Fellows preached we slept or yawned. Michelet, in his *La Sorcière,* describes how the boredom of the Breviary in the Middle Ages brought on a kind of disease of yawning which the peasants ascribed to the malice of the devil; and indeed it is a most infectious and insidious complaint. So thought a boy who used to sit in the front row, for during the sermon he would open and shut his hands slowly just in front of the row of masters opposite till he set them all agape. "Stiggins" James was the only exception, because he used to listen to the sermon with closed eyes.

Says Mr. Lyttelton: "Bishop Chapman once began his discourse with the question, 'What is leasing?' and as no boy, and probably not all the masters, knew what leasing was, there was something approaching to a hush in the congregation. But it was unavailing. The sentence conveyed no meaning, and at the end of twenty-five minutes we listlessly sauntered out of the building, leaving the question of leasing exactly where it was before.

"Archdeacon Balston was afflicted with phlegm in

the trachea, and used to clear his throat every few words, and speak hoarsely in between. Once, on a broiling-hot day in the summer half, he chose the text about heaping coals of fire on one's enemy's head, and began a sentence like this, 'On the head—that is, on the top—ahem—and no doubt in the very centre of the top, where—ahem—science tells us there is what is called a ganglion of nerves, so that the pain of contact would just there—ahem—be most acute,' and so on for thirty-five minutes. We could always hear Edward Coleridge, who was entirely beautiful to look at; William Carter also was audible, but his tone induced sleep. Old Stephen Hawtrey was put up to preach on the wonderful theme of the death of one of Eton's greatest heroes, Patteson (the martyr-bishop of Nukapu); and all he could do was to read extracts from letters, giving the sayings of South Pacific Island boys *in broken English!*"

The glaring fault of these Sunday services in Chapel was their inordinate length. It is not reasonable to expect boys to hold their attention through a choral morning service with chants, anthem, and hymns, perhaps an added chanted Litany, ante-Communion, and then a sermon of over thirty minutes. What devotion can they have left for the Holy Communion at the end of all this? Small wonder that many of us

preferred to attend early service in the parish church in High Street rather than communicate in our own Chapel after such an ordeal. There were some very few to whom neither of the services appealed, souls of a more fastidious cast, who preferred the more provocative accompaniments to their devotions of banners, candles, copes, and the more elaborate ritual of the High Church; these took a further journey afield, and received the ministrations of "Father" T. T. Carter, as he was called, at Clewer. Frequent confession of such little peccadilloes into which the schoolboy falls was considered necessary by these devotees before receiving the elements, so that there were many excursions to the Windsor suburb. This was perhaps natural under the circumstances, for, in spite of the constant adjuration by the Provost in Chapel to "come to me or any other learned minister," he would have been a bold person who asked the Provost to confess him, and would have caused the good man no little perturbation. I am confident that much of the irreligion of our youth and after life was due to the intolerable boredom of these long services in Chapel.

As regards music, our service was distinctly good and appropriate, for though Wagner had just begun to illuminate the musical horizon in England with his novel progressions, and a new era in harmony was

beginning, Barnby was careful not to impair our musical digestions with new-fangled food; but nursed us soundly on Handel, Purcell, Haydn, Mendelssohn, and the like. The Hallelujah Chorus was a favourite dish, and lent itself to parody by the irreverent. There happened to be two Eton watermen, called Jack Hatherley and Bob Tolladay respectively, and when certain cadences in this chorus were sung by the choir, they received adventitious aid from the boys, who used to murmur, "Jack Hatherley, Bob Tolladay, Jack Hatherley, Bob Tolladay," but this underlying chorus never rose to the pitch of the 136th Psalm, and so passed unnoticed.

On one occasion during the sermon a swallow gained entrance by the north door, and, being unable to find any perch on which to settle, flew up and down the whole length of chapel. This was enough to rivet the attention of every boy in the building, and every head turned to follow the flight of the bird in a regular rhythm, and one could hear the friction of hundreds of necks against hundreds of starched collars, making a confused noise like that made by the turning over of programmes in a concert room.

On another occasion, a squirrel, said to have been brought in and let loose by the son of a Cabinet Minister, astonished at its surroundings, after scuttling about

among the boys, took refuge in the woodwork of the stalls, a climbing ground which gave ample scope to its powers displayed during a long sermon. The person most to be pitied was the preacher, for his words were not even addressed to a deaf or sleeping congregation, but to one whose whole attention was fixed elsewhere. Every eye in the place watched the gambols of the squirrel, and when it played "bo-peep" and chattered among the pinnacles of the stalls, even the masters themselves had much ado to repress their smiles. At last it disappeared among the organ pipes, only to be discharged in abject fright as soon as the big chords of the concluding voluntary struck up. What happened finally to the poor little animal we never heard, but it may be taken for certain that its master, G. Hunt, never laid claim to its possession.

There were various ways of relieving the tedium of a long sermon. A tuning-fork, passed from hand to hand, sounded on the lower side of a seat or book-rest, afforded a fair imitation of a game of "hunt-the-slipper" with the master in desk. The temporary possessors displayed that gravity and unconcern which befitted future legislators, judges, prelates, or leaders of men; and it is extraordinary how soon valuable talents of this nature come out in the young.

But in spite of those youthful irreverences, which

will probably come uppermost in the memory of those who possess a sense of humour, the old boy will always look back with love to the simple and hearty services in Chapel, and he will rejoice to find the same old hymns ringing up into the roof with the deep roar of male voices singing in unison. He will probably miss the bowed figure of old "Silver Poker" Holderness, clutching that time-honoured emblem of the majesty of the Provost, in his arms in the manner of "Punch," limping up Chapel to save his gouty toes, and endeavouring to avoid on his way to the pulpit steps the youthful feet thrust out to trip him up; and perhaps a portlier form now hugs the college insignia, but such a figure will never carry the same air of mellowed respectability and of crusted refinement. It takes an ancient foundation to produce such an embodiment of staid dignity. Banks, clubs, and kindred institutions do not do it, for their porters and butlers retire on pensions almost as soon as the dignity of age sets in, only to disappear and be forgotten in the suburbs; but a man like Holderness, in the quietude of college life, will hold on to the baton of his office so long as his tottering frame will bear it.

And the bell! The old Etonian will be glad to hear even that cracked sound, slowly tolling with melancholy note, and getting more rapid just as the time for

Mr. HOLDERNESS ("Silver Poker")

From a photograph

service arrives. That sound of warning sometimes sweeps across the dreams of middle-aged men in the far-off forest or the lone veldt, and they have been transported back to the days of their youth, and a sudden fear surges up within them that they will be late for Chapel, or perhaps that they are hastening thither without a rag on but a rowing zephyr; they hasten, but with leaden feet kicking against inexorable fate, and when the Chapel door is slammed in their face they wake, glad to find that it was nothing but a dream, and yet half sorry that some of it was not true, half sorry that in spite of the joys of work, of honours won, and reputation assured, they are not again enjoying the irresponsibility of youth. Snatches of simple melody from Handel or Mendelssohn which remain unforgettable, airs like "O for the Wings of a Dove," will rise in the memory of many a weary swelterer in the tropics, and conjure up a vision in the mind of a tall and stately building, crowned with delicate pinnacles and ribbed with white buttresses, of canopied stalls, white-robed scholars, the frosted and venerable heads of Provost and Fellows, and a mass of youthful figures, all gathered together to the praise of the Father of us all. Oh, yes, we love our Chapel.

CHAPTER IV

ITINERANT FACES

"In the commonest human face there lies more than Raphael will take away with him."—THOMAS CARLYLE.

IF we could have a faithful study of the camp-followers, minstrels, and pipers and troubadours who accompanied the armies of history, we should have a chronicle almost, if not more, interesting than the account of the battles which they fought. On reading some of the records of the colloquies of some of the troubadours one is led to imagine that the mediæval mind was content with very little, but one's interest is immediately roused at the account of the jongleur who juggled with a sword in the face of the two armies at Poitiers, and so distracted the attention of the soldiers from the movements of the enemy. The amusements of a people are a fair indication of its habits, and though, as old Etonians, we should be sorry to be judged by some of our amusements, still the occasional caterers to our pleasure were not without interest and deserve a passing word.

It was only natural that a collection of nearly a

thousand boys should be an attraction to migratory characters of all sorts, and though the authorities discouraged their permanent settlement, nevertheless many vagrant exponents of the arts found profitable patronage amongst us. Some of them were probably the survivors of those who ministered to the high revel of Windsor Fair till the beginning of the 'seventies. The Fair itself had been done away with, and Bachelor's Acre had become the stage of occasional circuses and merry-go-rounds, and once only of a battle between the boys and the Windsor cads in resuscitation of the old practice. Most of the performers were frequenters of other fairs and race-courses, and could be heard of at Ascot, Henley, and the Derby.

Without question Jim Crow led the profession. He was as much the direct lineal predecessor of the great Squash as John Parry was of Corney Grain. I never ascertained his real name, though I had occasional talks with him when, shorn of his war paint, he sat placidly fishing from a punt near Brocas Clump. Jim Crow, the nigger minstrel, was a sufficient personality for us. With oval regular features, not unlike the late Mr. Justice Hawkins, he carried an air of refinement and respectability, which was heightened by the old-fashioned Gladstone collars that he wore. This somewhat classical countenance was flanked by

two well-shaped ears, set off by gold split rings, which latter gave a smack of the Indies and the South Seas, and a black swallow-tailed coat, reaching to within a foot of the ground, graced with large brass buttons, and worn over spotless white ducks, completed his make-up, for he was hatless. His instrument was a Stradivarius among banjos, not one of your twanging, metal, five-stringed apologies, but an old-fashioned inlaid wooden instrument with seven strings and a face like a harvest moon, and its parchment mellowed by age. From this he produced rich music, ranging from grave to gay with quick change. With the chartered boldness of a court fool he interlarded his request for money with ready chaff, not often tainted by vulgarity, coining adjectives and names with rare invention. "Make room, you little slapcabbages," he would say with a wave of the hand to the small boys who crowded him. But though his witticism has been forgotten, fragments of some of his songs still stick in the memory. That, for instance, of the "Pull Back," where

> "My massa kept a sarvin' girl
> To wash the plates and dishes,
> Whenever she combed her curly hair
> She combed out little fishes;
> Wasn't that a pull back?
> Yes it was a drawback.
> Yah! I'm dying for Jemima." *Ad lib.*

Or, again,

> "Head cook, bottle washer, captain of the waiters,
> Stand on my head while you peel a bag o' taters,
> Divil a bit of difference, either you or I,
> Big pig or little pig, or root hog or dry."

Crystallised in cold print these ditties may appear arrant nonsense, but the lilt of the tongue, the merry rattle of the banjo, the costume, and the expressive black face, carried them through, and we certainly thought them more amusing, though perhaps more inconsequent, than "Champagne Charlie," "In the Strand," and such popular songs. Some of his songs, however, were not to be repeated in a mixed company.

> "Jonah in the whale's belly
> Three days and nights accordin',
> Jonah gave a kick, and the whale was sick
> And shot him to the other side of Jordan."

Chorus *ad lib.* "Pulling on the old coat, tucking up your sleeve,
Jordan's a hard road to travel, I believe,"

was one verse of "T'other side of Jordan," but there were other verses of a flavour perhaps too Rabelaisian to be inserted here. They contained unquestioned wit, and their plainness of expression left no room for any of that suggestion so often present in songs of that kind. You might liken them to the writings of Swift as compared to those of Sterne. There were no synonyms for a spade, and no asterisks. The end

of these entertainers is usually unascertainable: they simply disappear, and you assume their decease. What happened to Jim Crow is not recorded; but wherever he is laid there are many Etonians who would gladly bestow a tributary token on his grave.

Another quaint character was a little pigmy of a man we called "the Wirer," for what reason I never knew. In the words of the song, "He had but one eye to ogle you by, oh murther! but that was a jew'l!" He approached you flourishing a pair of scissors in one hand and a piece of black paper in the other, and demanded permission to take your portrait. He passed such delicate encomiums upon your beauty that, in spite of your almost maidenly blushes and disclaimers, you yielded and consented to stand and deliver your profile. It was done in the twinkling of an eye. With quick, rat-like glances at you, the paper revolved this way and that in his deft fingers, and he produced a perfect outline after the manner of an old daguerrotype. Then, producing a card from a rusty bag slung over his shoulder, he pasted your image thereon, which was always quite accurate enough for recognition, and demanded whether you would have it plain or decorated. If the former, the price was sixpence, if the latter, he added some gilding

to represent the wave of the hair and the shine of the hat to give it a spruce appearance, and the thing was done at a shilling, and your youth was immortalised for ever. The man was a genius, for, in spite of the fidgets and grimaces of his models, he never failed to produce something of a likeness. His work is imperishable, for it will never fade, and I have seen worse profiles on the walls of the Academy.

There was another familiar figure who was always to be seen at Henley, Windsor races, and kindred gatherings, and was a miracle worker in his way. He had a small platform, surmounted by a board which announced to the world at large that he was "Champion Stonebreaker to the Prince of Wales," though it was not known by what means he had attained to that eminent position. He was wont to break large flints, ploughshares, and bits of iron with his fist. In physique he was a mere wisp of a man, a dark, lithe Indian in a gay-coloured turban. You were allowed to examine his paraphernalia while he wound a silk handkerchief round his hand, and, after much patter and collection of coin, he worked himself up with a great waving of arms into excitement, then, quick as lightning, with a sharp cry the little fist descended with a dull thud, and the flint was broken in two! It was said that he would break any flint you gave him,

provided it was a large one, though I confess I never saw him break any other than his own. The only point which militated against the lurking suspicion of a fraud was the extraordinary rapidity of his blow, and whenever he did not succeed at the first attempt it evidently gave him pain in more senses than one, and yet it is quite possible that we were taken in. Moreover, he would take a large swede, mangold wurzel, or potato, throw it high into the air, and break it in its fall on his forehead. This he did by jumping up to meet the root in its descent, so as to make the impact greater. I remember on one occasion it did not break, and he was nearly stunned and apparently in some pain, for he would not repeat the experiment for some time. His patter suffered somewhat in this interval, but he tried again and succeeded.

Goolah, too, was a character in his way, though perhaps more limited in his talents than those I have noticed. I saw him in 1908 performing in Brocas Meadow on the 4th of June, looking not a day older than when we boys laughed at him in the 'seventies, not a wrinkle in the shining, ugly, grinning, black face, and not a silver thread to his wool. This leads us to inquire why it is that some full-blooded negroes "preserve" so well. I have seen some in America, who have owned to more than the respectable

age of sixty years, without a trace of it in their appearance. A stiffness of gait perhaps, an accentuation of the negro shuffle betraying a want of elasticity, would be the only outward sign of the weight of years. Can it be that, by some beneficent law of compensation, being born low in the scale of beauty, they have no good looks to lose, and so keep the youthful ugliness with which they came into the world? Indomitable cheerfulness is a characteristic of their race, and I think the habit of smiling must be a good preservative. Goolah's smile was "a thing to dream of, not to tell," and when he decorated his mighty mouth with buttresses of bone to imitate the fearsome sound and awful sight of "the Great Gorilla" in his native forest, you recognised at once that there is a fascination and a beauty in extreme ugliness. No European grin through a horse collar, no tragic mask, ever came near to the Olympian grotesqueness of this African countenance. The little boys retreated half in terror when he stalked on them, thrumming a monotonous theme on his battered banjo, only to return again exploding with laughter. When he opened his cavernous mouth one was reminded of the old picture of the mouth of Tartarus, into which the souls of the damned are being crowded; and indeed no orange was too big to go in and out of it without a scratch. But

his great accomplishment was the throwing of split canes into the infinite. He pretended that he threw them across the river, but as no one could ever discover exactly where they fell and examine them minutely, a mystery attaches to those said canes. Possibly some of them will be found some day lying on the surface of the moon or the planet Mars, as the case may be. The way he started them was this. Out of a bundle of split canes of about eighteen inches to two feet long he would select one, smooth the ends with his finger, wind a piece of string round it at one end in some way which was never allowed to be clear to the spectator by reason of conjuror's passes and flourishes, then he would make several feints at throwing it, to divert the attention of the crowd by making them look up into the sky and perhaps be dazzled thereby, and at last, with a shout and a quick throw, he sent the little cane spinning like a top and soaring into the zenith till you almost lost sight of it. The wind usually carried it to some distance laterally, and, as he always skilfully chose his light and his background, its fall was generally a matter of conjecture. He has been seen, I am told, performing in St. Paul's Churchyard, pretending to throw his cane over the dome, and whether it actually went over or not was never certain, on account of London smoke, but the

fact of his attempting it shows that his canes flew to a great height. Good luck to you, Goolah, wherever you may be, and may your old age be as happy as your ugly, good-humoured grin!

As in the childhood of the world primitive man had his glimmerings of art exemplified by bone carving and rock-cut designs, so the Eton boy had a decorative taste in the egg, as it were. This was ministered to chiefly by Tom Page in the shape of Ackerman's hunting scenes, cheerful in scarlet and green. There was the horse in the conventional attitude, with limbs spread and poised in mid-air in the act of taking a fence, and there he remained to all eternity, till you longed to see him land at last, and the fox too, like "Charley's Aunt," perpetually running. His tail dangled from many a picture nail, and his mask grinned at you from among the flowery splendours of Fourth of June hats.

But though trophies of the chase were conspicuous in most rooms, some of us had leanings toward the more peaceful and less bloody specimens of the plastic art. These we bought from a street vendor whom we called "Italiano." He bore the aristocratic appearance of a scion of an ancient race, and there was a mild air of patronage about him when he offered his wares, as who should say ,"I bring you the culture

and the arts of the ages for the good of your souls." He was no cheapjack Autolycus to impose on the ignorant, his was no pardoner's scrip with false relics to deceive; he showed you an antique, a vile copy if you like, and his melancholy smile did the rest. It became part of your artistic development to acquire at the bidding of that smile a reduced cast of Cupid and Psyche, or the Dying Gaul, at the price of a few shillings. They became your *lares et penates*, enshrined on brackets, or perched on the mantelpiece all glorious with a velvet border bought last half at a knockout sale from a leaving boy, and there they remained till shattered by some stray orange or fives ball. But even noblemen must live, and he sadly pursued the bulk of his trade in reduced busts of celebrities such as Gladstone, Disraeli, and the Queen. A royal wedding gave a great impetus to the market in heads of "Lorne and Louhise," and the appearance of the Shah of Persia on his pink-tailed horse at the review in Windsor Park produced many plaster souvenirs of his visit. The tastes of the religious were encouraged by Thorwaldsen's Apostles and the figure of Christ, but the "Garden Angels" were not for such as us, for he considered, perhaps rightly, that we were past the "Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John" stage. But his heart was with the classics, for he always wore

a witching smile and a gentle air of appreciation when he offered you an "antique." Once, and once only, did I ever see him cast aside his impenetrable cloak of dignified good humour. One day he was carrying his basket of images as usual on his head, when a wicked iconoclast, in the shape of a lower boy, dropped a football from a window into the basket and broke an image of Christ. Spurred by either religious or artistic rage, his southern blood boiled forth in a torrent of mingled Italian and English curses, an exhibition of righteous indignation which would have pleased a Hebrew prophet.

The great Spankie, I believe, died somewhere about the 'sixties, but there still remained about the wall in the early 'seventies two decayed traders in sweet stuff, lingering specimens of the race of "sock" cads. One was a one-armed man named Knox, and the other was a blear-eyed blonde, with a bulbous nose, who rejoiced in the name of Brian, and I can only suppose that the vile quality of their wares caused a slump in "sock," for they soon disappeared and left an undisputed market to the shops, viz. Brown, Barnes-Brown, and Califano. No one need mourn their disappearance, for there was nothing to distinguish them save that they were relics of a bilious system of credit, and parasites on the body politic.

Of a different complexion was Fat Powell, who ministered to our more active instincts. Who can forget that portly figure, ἐυρύ-πρωκτος, in cords, gaiters, and brown velveteen coat? And his chimney-pot, tallest of the tall, with flat wide brim and mourning band! The distance between his bag of footballs, which he carried on his back, and the brass buttons on the prow of his waistcoat, must have been a matter of five feet, and yet there was an old-world dignity about such solidity. You might as well have tried to chaff Dr. Johnson as to try to get a rise out of Fat Powell. You felt that you were in the presence of an institution like the dome of St. Paul's, an encyclopædia of sporting memory and football lore. "Ah, sir! you should a' seen —— run down and get a goal in the 'Ouse Match final in '64." 'Sixty-four was the Dark Ages to us, and we were always duly impressed. In the words of one of A. C. Ainger's Eton songs:

> "See where the match he stands to watch,
> Who many a match has seen;
> Cheerful and fat, with high-crowned hat,
> And suit of velveteen.
> He blew the ball, he knows them all,
> The Homer of the fray.
> He sings the heroes of the 'wall'
> Upon St. Andrew's day."

Moreover, you felt an instinctive reverence for a figure

Mr. POWELL ("Joby")

From a photograph

that seemed to have stepped straight out of an old sporting print—tall hat, gaiters, and all—and that somehow he ought to be carrying a rod or gun instead of a bag of balls, and that out of his ample tail pockets ferrets' and rabbits' legs ought to peep instead of a red cotton handkerchief. Some bold person one day called him "Tichborne," likening him to the claimant in a once famous case, but he turned it off with Olympian scorn, saying: "I wouldn't be in his shoes for summat." And indeed he spoke truth without knowing it, for it was discovered when Arthur Orton went to prison that, among other bodily alterations, in order to counterfeit the small feet of Roger Tichborne he had subjected his toes to the most painful compression and distortion, and Powell's foundations were certainly massive and built to carry weight.

CHAPTER V

INDIGENOUS CHARACTERS

"An acquaintance is the first draft of a friend."—JOHN EARLE.

IT were better that he who dealt with Eton boys should possess an imperturbable temper, but there was one hot-headed Italian who invariably rose to the bait. To "rag" Califano in his shop in High Street was one of the legitimate amusements of a summer afternoon. When he presented you with one of his specialities in the shape of a pink, white, and green Neapolitan ice, a sure way of rousing his temper was to blandly inquire whether he put arsenic in the green part or flavoured the pink with ham, because you were sure you tasted ham. Then, having eaten it, the only logical course was to refuse to pay for it, as it was such a nauseous decoction. Then after a wordy battle, during which his pale face grew livid under his paper cap, and his voice grew higher and higher till it could be heard across the street, you gave in with an air of generosity towards a poor devil of a

foreigner who was a bad cook and could not help it. On one occasion the late Arthur Dunn roused old Califano to such a pitch of fury that black murder was only averted by instant flight, for the outraged cook chased him down the street brandishing a long carving-knife; to little purpose, be it added, for what could a fat greyhead accomplish in the pursuit of a future Corinthian football player? There were times when you could not be certain what Califano would do in one of his rages, for he broke a teacup over the head of an aggravating boy one day, and stoutly refused to apologise. With a man who would retaliate in that fashion you could go only a certain distance; when the kettle boiled over, it was apt to scald one's fingers.

Who could forget old Brown in his poky little shop opposite Chapel? There he lived in a permanent shrine devoted to the worship of buns and ices, and the Etonian does not live who has ever seen Brown abroad in the street. What he looked like going to church or on a holiday is beyond conjecture, but in his shop he appeared to us as an ascetic and chastened Ally Sloper. A glutton undergoing a penance of living in the presence of an array of good things could not have looked more sorrowful, and his face, pale from the contiguity of baked buns, showed deep lines of

ill-temper and melancholy, caused by the inability to cope with the clamorous demands of generations of Etonians for immediate sustenance. He was an Ally Sloper who had never had a holiday, whose nose had never been tinctured by the use of the grape. He, and his daughter, of a still creamier pallor, had never been young; the toil of service had aged them in their teens, and had fossilised their countenances to the perpetuity of middle age; their complexions were monumental, as befitting a type of the permanence of Eton institutions. It would be an interesting task for a statistician to calculate the number of poached eggs and hot buns which came annually out of that black cooking-stove. Mr. Lyttelton has sent an estimate in £ *s.* *d.* in the following, which I am at liberty to quote: "There was no sort of restriction in this terrific consumption of food. It has been estimated at £10,000 per annum, and certainly might be put at nearer £15,000. The expenditure was, of course, often a legitimate addition to the wretched supply for tea and breakfast. But, apart from this, it did much harm. Pernicious kickshaws at 1 P.M. would take away all appetite for the coarse mutton at 2, hence insufficient meat diet when the work and play in the day was very trying and the nights invariably too short. There is no question however

that, as compared with twenty years later, the average boy was tougher.

"Brown was, in my day, only frequented by lower boys. For some reason or other no fifth-form boy ever went there. There was no rule against it, but a prevailing feeling that it ought not to be. . . . On one occasion, about 1873, a huge mob of boys assembled outside the shop and shouted 'Brown! Brown!' by the space of ten minutes or so, for no assignable reason whatever except perhaps to anger the bearish old man. This was in the afternoon. Mitchell (old Mike, the cricketing master) appeared suddenly with a big stick and dispersed us, earning the silent gratitude of little ——, who was just buckling on his armour (an old greatcoat) to face the seething mass, knowing full well his own utter incapacity to deal with the situation."

Another institution which pandered to the appetites was "Tap." Traditionally supposed to have emanated originally from the forbidden "X," or Christopher Hotel, and being the only public-house to which the boys, and they only of the bigger sort, had access, it always seemed to keep a flavour of privilege and of "out of bounds" about it. It was kept originally by Sergeant-Major Hobbs, the drill-sergeant of the volunteers, under authoritative sanc-

tion, and when he died and was buried with a brave show of military honours, which we gave him, his buxom widow was allowed to continue the business. Whether it was due to the mildness of the beer, or to its being an ale-house only, or to the motherly good sense of Mrs. Hobbs, I do not remember anyone being seriously affected by the liquor dispensed therein, whereas, I regret to say, from visits further afield to the forbidden resorts of Windsor, boys frequently returned the worse for their potations, especially during two wild years when a wave of gambling and of drink seemed to pass over the school. Naturally it did not last long, for the ringleaders of the fashion got themselves into various scrapes and disappeared.

But although an occasional "dry bob" slaked his thirst at "Tap" before lock-up, it was mainly the resort of "wet bobs." Many an oar has fortified his inner man with a tea and poached eggs at "Tap" before his tussle with "Duffers" below bridge down Datchet way, and in that inner sanctum what boating secrets, what opinions discussed by the chieftains, making or marring the careers of many a budding oar, have fallen unheeded on the ears of Mrs. Hobbs as she sat brooding over her bar like a hen! In a corner, on two wooden supports, lay the long glass, that precious relic of the skilled and deep drinker. It was like drinking

out of a monstrous bell-mouthed barometer. To tackle it required patience and a steady hand. You took it in your hand and began slowly drinking, and at first all seemed easy, then a gurgling began as the air entered the bulb, and a series of beery waves came surging down the tube, overflowing the corners of the mouth, and you were lucky if you happened at the time not to be wearing a white waistcoat. In such a case it were well to follow the Onslow motto, "Festina lente."

Further up the street lay a house which was covered by no privilege. In it was a low back parlour, where sacrifices were made by youthful votaries to the Goddess Nicotina. The high priestess of the shrine was the black-eyed Kitty Fraser, a little lady who possessed the remains of what must have been considerable personal attraction. The catechumen or novitiate in these rites burned the incense of the mild cigarette, and not seldom his enthusiasm for the cult led him on to the more manly orgy of a pipe or cigar, then he would become weary of well-doing, and the benevolent Kitty would thrust her head out of the shop door, cast a watchful eye up and down the street to spy out the approaching "beak," and if none were there, a boy, a trifle paler than usual, and with a moist feeling about the brow, would suddenly appear on the

pavement and hurry back to his tutor's. We will not follow him further, for the heroism of the small boy is too sacred for investigation. Later on he sometimes found a local shrine for worship on the roof of my tutor's, where the arduous labour of colouring his first meerschaum was carried on.

In former days, and I believe down to the 'seventies, Kitty Fraser kept a kind of *pœna* bazaar, where you could purchase Georgics and Eclogues and even Greek punishments for so much the hundred lines, but I never availed myself of it. The orthography of *pœnas* was not criticised save by a few masters, and it mattered not so long as the paper was filled with writing; consequently there were some ingenious enough to tie two or more pens together so as to fill up the space, but you had to know your master. A *pœna* set by the head master was little more than an authoritative reprimand, for the custom was to hand in the punishment on or before the appointed time to the Head's butler in the pantry; the top sheet was covered with writing, but underneath the sheets were unsullied by the pen. What happened after they were handed in no one knew, but certain it is that many of us considered that the Head was well aware of the subterfuge, but was too much of a gentleman to interfere. He was very popular among the boys, was Dr. Hornby.

Perhaps we owed this delightful state of things to Mr. Lyttelton, for he writes: "I remember writing about four hundred lines of an Iliad, but two hundred were blown out of the window into Keate's Lane. With some misgiving I showed up the rest, but heard nothing of it. This fact got abroad, and there ensued a 'slump' in lines shown up, but probably a 'boom' in the amount set.

"There was an incredible system known as Exemptions, *i.e.* a boy who did a good piece of work was given one or two or three bits of paper, which cancelled a fairly long *pœna*, no matter how richly deserved. The scale may be estimated by the remark made by a present M.P. (at Eton in 1885): 'Up to Roublot (the French master) three exemptions would see you safe through bringing a black cat into school.' Often exemptions were got for simply doing a smart map, the outline traced on a window, and a lot of unthinking, useless work spent in embellishing it." And yet I must point out that we learnt two things of value from those maps—neatness and a certain amount of geography.

I think my contemporaries will mostly agree with me that, of all methods of punishments, that of compelling boys to write out Georgics and the like was the most senseless which could possibly be devised.

The man who invented this form of punishment had revenge not far from his purview. If the only object was to confine the victim within doors, it of course succeeded, but poor Psyche's task at the Court of Venus was not more hopeless and cruel. To write out vast screeds of Latin and Greek poems, without a thought as to their meaning, in a hurried scrawl, was neither good for the brain nor the future handwriting. The marvel is that any man who has scribbled through miles of such punishment retains any power of writing legibly at all. But for such detestable practice we might all have at least emulated the beautiful caligraphy of such men as Cardinal Newman and Benjamin Jowett, whose experience of *pœnas* in their youth was probably small. I happened to write a slow and laborious hand, but I have yet to learn that any master exercised any discrimination on that account.

I have spoken elsewhere of hats. There was a tutelary deity who presided over the renovation of tall hats in an inner shrine in the shop of Sanders and Brown. He was called Solomon. Whether that was his real name or not, I am sure none of us knew; but his good-humoured smile suggested benevolence rather than wisdom. He was an arrangement in white, for his face was pale, matching the background of band-boxes; his hair was snowy, and he wore a paper cap

and white apron like a chef. He was a magician learned in the alchemy of black silk, for you brought him your battered and furry tile previous to going on leave, and, while you waited and gossiped, every valley was made smooth with his deft fingers, the brim reassumed its fashionable curl, its surface came out from before the furnace glossy as satin, and you went forth to face the world crowned with something more than respectability. How many of us have strutted at Lord's before the eyes of London in the pride of one of his glorious renovations—I had almost said regenerations. If a man wears a smart hat and neat boots, I think it matters not how shabbily he wears the rest of his clothes. Not that I mean to imply that any of us were shabby at Lord's, for we were bound to show the Harrovians how much better than they we could dress.

Beyond Kitty Fraser's, till you came to the Brocas, there was no shop of importance except Hills and Saunders', where you could flatten your nose against the window and admire the heroes of to-day and yesterday. There you could see groups of the Eight and the Eleven decked in the panoply of white flannels; the Field Eleven at the beginning of the 'seventies with trousers tucked inside their socks, after 1873 or thereabouts in knickerbockers; and the various winners

of the House contests proudly regarding their silver trophies.

Then came the Brocas, where, if you rowed, you could not choose but become acquainted with Harry Goodman. For about two pounds you could secure a "chance," which meant that you had to hasten down to get whatever craft you could get, so that in that case priority of call at "absence" was not to be despised, but for three pounds and upwards you could get a "lock-up," *i.e.* a boat of your own in the shape of a clinker-built "whiff," or you could share a "cedar" pair-oar with a friend. Harry Goodman was a character in his way—short, clean shaven, and handsome, with dark, sallow face and black eyes, one whose occupation as a boatbuilder evidently sat uneasy on his conscience, for his heart was with the drama. Whether he had ever strutted on the boards in his young days I know not, but the way he waved his hand to Bill to get out a gig from the boathouse suggested, "What ho! thou varlet, saddle me my horse." His office or inner sanctum was decorated with pictures of theatrical worthies of past time, and among them I seem to remember coloured prints of the great Macready as Ion and Werner, and portraits of C. M. Young as Brutus, and one of Miss Helen Faucit as Pauline in the *Lady of Lyons*. Here he would

Mr. HARRY GOODMAN (Boatbuilder)

From a photograph

delight in giving us his opinion as dramatic critic upon the plays he had seen in his youth. "Ah, sir! Macready was a great actor, the greatest I have ever seen; Kean, too, was well enough—flashing eyes and all that—but give me Macready, sir, for tragedy; he had a presence, sir, and carried weight. What do I think was his finest part? Well, you'll be surprised, not in Shakespeare, sir. The play which suited him best was Mr. Sergeant Talfourd's *Ion*—look at him there, sir, in the print—a grand play; you should 'a seen him in that. I don't suppose anyone else could play it. By gad, sir, he was fine!" And his eyes would kindle with the remembrance as he struck the table with his fist. "There are no fine actors nowadays. What? have I seen this new man Irving in Miss Bateman's Company? Why, I went up 'a purpose to see him last winter, the papers said so much about him. What do *I* think?" Then he would make a face as if he had smelt a bad smell. "Thin, sir, too thin. Garrick?" Then he would threaten us with a smile. "Go along! you're getting at me. He was before my time."

The Brocas cad was an amphibious breed descended, I should imagine, from the lake dwellers, for he lived for the most part in wet trousers. Notable was "Gaffer," a short, grizzled oddity, with a fringe of

white whisker all round his face; a battered straw hat with a faded Eton Eight ribbon on the back of his head, tattered shirt, a patched pair of grey flannels on his bow legs, and an ancient pair of fives shoes, down at the heel and just hanging together, stood for his outfit. If you were a candidate for Lower Boy Sculling or Pulling, or Junior ditto, this old relic undertook to coach you and steer you over the course during practice for a consideration. To this day I envy the man his heart and lungs. To run up to Rushes above "Athens" and back at full speed, shouting all the way, perhaps twice over, was all in the day's work. "Pull your left, sir, you're gettin' too far out. Now then, you blanketty-blank of a bargee, do you want all the river to yourself? Look ahead, sir. Pull your roight, sir, pull your roight; come into the bank," &c. &c. Then, after the course he would encourage you by saying, "You're comin' on, sir, foine." But if you wanted his real opinion of your chances you had to get it second-hand, and he was very often right. A friend of mine once brought to Eton a London-built racing outrigger said to have been used by the great Playford, and, my friend being a light boy, the bows were well above the water. On being asked what he thought about the boat, "Gaffer"

replied in his hoarse voice, "Don't tell me that's any use; look at her bows stickin' up in the air. Whoy! it's scullin' up'ill all the time."

"Gaffer" was no authority on displacement of water, but if you wanted a tip as to the winner of a race he was no bad oracle to consult. He knew when a man was skilful at negotiating the rye peck, and who was likely to gain advantage by taking the corner clean at Upper Hope and Sandbank, and the form which would tell in the long run. Whenever old "Gaffer" crossed the Styx I am certain that he gave Charon some hints on punting and sculling, and he is probably sitting now on the banks of Hades in wet grey flannels.

In the summer half Brocas cads had a busy time. When hundreds of boys poured down on to the rafts after absence, all eager to get afloat and go up to Surly, or perhaps Monkey Island, to lift boat after boat off the rack, and put them in the water and supply them with rudders and oars and stretchers to the satisfaction of the impatient Etonian, was not an easy task. Then, in the evening, there were breakages and losses to be accounted for, and the boats to be swabbed out.

One named Bob Emmeney had a fishlike figure, short and wide at the hips, would perform a courageous feat, never without the "consideration" which

screwed up his courage to the sticking point. When the hat was sufficiently filled he would climb up on the railway arches, ascend to the top of the iron bridge, and take a header of some sixty feet into the river.

Then there was "Sambo," who presided over Searle's raft, devoted exclusively to the swells in the boats, looking like a respectable coachman, with hat perennially perched on the back of his head, and leather belt round his ample waist—a great designer of racing craft. He never forgot a rowing face, and would welcome any old oar, however disguised with beard, whisker, or moustache. He could tell you about the great scullers of old; who won House Fours in what year; of the prowess of Kinglake, Corkran, and the M'Clintock Bunburys in the Pulling; and, if you could by chance get him to reveal his real opinion, he was able from his past experience to gauge very correctly the chances of the Eight at Henley. He handled his boats like eggshells, and had the artificer's care of the craft that he had fashioned; and now and then, after a rough day, or if he heard of a possible strain, he would, after carefully placing the eight-oar on the rack, squint down her sides and bottom to see if her lines were in any way disturbed. He had seen the introduction of sliding-seats, and had, under the direction

of Mr. Warre, made many experiments in water displacement.

What is it about an Eton face which makes it unchangeable? The faces of one's school companions change, they grow old with oneself, they grow moustaches and beards, they get bald in the crown, but an Eton face remains the same. It is older than yourself when you live with it; the eyes of youth look upon it as mature or middle-aged; and when you meet such an one as old Joel limping about Lord's or Henley, with his short leg, and wearing the light-blue ribbon, looking very little older, your mind flashes back to your boyhood, and you see him prancing along Common Lane and the Wall, and you have a visionary recollection of Eton scenes and Eton incidents on which it is a pleasure to dwell.

CHAPTER VI

TALES OUT OF SCHOOL

"He who hath not a dram of folly in his mixture hath pounds of much worse stuff in his composition."—C. LAMB.

I SHOULD very much like to meet the man who could honestly lay his hand on his heart and say that he has spent an immaculate youth and never committed any peccadilloes or got into scrapes. I should commiserate him for the dullness of his youth, or accuse him of having preserved all his vices for mature cultivation. Thackeray records of Richard Steele that "he was very idle. He was whipped deservedly a great number of times. Though he had very good parts of his own, he got other boys to do his lessons for him (notably Addison), and only just took as much trouble as should enable him to scuffle through his exercises, and by good fortune escape the flogging-block." And this is a boyhood typical of many men, whether distinguished or otherwise. High spirits and a certain amount of ingenuity are necessary to a breaker of rules, and neither quality can be said to be altogether

valueless in later life. Nearly all great and good men have kicked over the traces to a certain extent in their boyhood, but it does not follow that the early sowing of wild oats necessarily results in a good crop of grain in later years. Considering, therefore, the universal custom of youthful misbehaviour, these notes may be made without a blush, save the additional redness caused by a fear lest the *ego* should become too prominent.

For obvious reasons certain gatherings of men were placed out of bounds by the authorities, and for equally obvious reasons, the chief being that it was forbidden, we found means of attending these meetings. One of these was Windsor Races, which were held on the flat meadows on the other side of the river just above Clewer. The plan was to put on a "change" coat, take a boat and row it up to Clewer Creek, hide it in the bushes, and after surmounting a few obstacles you found yourself on the racecourse. The betting instinct being left out in my composition, I always regarded the knot of roaring bookies with a Platonic interest; but there was plenty to see in the racing itself, the side-shows, the boxing matches, the thimble-rigging, the man who wriggled free from the tightest of ropes, and I seem to hear now the raucous cries of the vendors of eatables ringing in my

ears. "'Oo'll 'av a bloody orange?" "Penny a packet of butterscotch." "Barcelona nuts." It was a joy fearfully snatched, seeing that some of the younger masters were sometimes told off for police duty. Can anything be more desperately exciting to the fugitive pickpocket than when he flees from the police through the devious alleys of a big city?—the quickness with which he turns and doubles back, piling up barriers between him and his pursuers, till finally he innocently emerges on a main thoroughfare and saunters along with a vigilant eye cast constantly behind him! On the one occasion when I attended Windsor Races with a friend, a master who fortunately did not know my name spotted us for Etonians and gave chase. My friend and I parted in opposite directions, and he, by some evolutions which I never understood, eluded pursuit successfully. I burrowed through the legs of the spectators on to the course, ran some distance down like a Derby dog amid the shouts of the spectators, buried myself in the crowd again, and waited till the race was over. Then I went and lay down in a ditch for half an hour, and successfully regained our boat, where I found my friend waiting for me with a triumphant and somewhat incoherent account of his adventures. He had run further than I, and had fallen over a tent rope,

so there was some excuse for his hazy story; but the great point was that neither of us had been caught.

On one occasion a brilliant idea struck one Aitken to attend the Windsor Races in the guise of a nigger minstrel. Such an enterprise cannot be undertaken alone, so to Basil Thomson he went, knowing the passion of the latter for cornet, bugle, and music generally; dresses were procured, and their temporary greenroom was a small public-house beyond Keate's Lane. The instruments were a pair of bones and an old fiddle, which neither of them could play. Those who have never had the experience can have no idea of the courage required to plunge forth into a public street disguised as a nigger. The first stage entrance of an actor pales in comparison; he has accessories in aid in the shape of footlights, scenery, and an audience in expectation of a given dramatic speech and action; but the nigger carries his own stage with him, and, beyond the set song, is his own playright; his text is all interpolation, his scenery his smutty face, and his personality and patter entirely his own. However, the plunge was made, the river crossed at Upper Hope in a punt, and then the minstrels began their wanderings, striving to enjoy themselves, but hoping to elude observation. But "Massa Johnson" and "Sambo" are too conspicuously labelled to succeed

in hiding themselves, so a crowd of small boys soon surrounded them, expecting the show to begin. All on a sudden a large and lewd fellow, whose calling was to deliver parcels for an Eton shop, opened a wide-mouthed shout that they were "students." Now a mere hint to a crowd, as I could show if necessary from personal experience, that they are not being treated to the genuine article, is enough to provoke instant hostilities, and the only resource is rapid flight. So off went the pair riverwards, and took their places in a punt whose Charon was to take them to their doom, for to their dismay on the opposite side appeared two junior and over-keen "beaks" ready to take down the names of the sinners. On landing they were still busy with a previous punt-load, and only one—a lanky, foolish sort of person—bore down upon them, intent upon a lower boy, a fellow-passenger. There was nothing to be done but to put a bold face upon it, so the two stepped jauntily out of the punt, marched straight up to the master, and offered to "play him a tune for sixpence." But he, more on duty bent than pleasure, waved them aside with the contemptuous air befitting a junior master, and they were free. A race for the public-house and a hasty application of soap was the conclusion of the adventure, though Thomson still

recollects the curious stare with which Mr. Cornish regarded his still somewhat shady countenance in five o'clock school. "For months afterwards the big-mouthed cad used to point me out to his companions as the bloke that went to the races as a nigger, and to snap his fingers in imitation of the bones."

A story runs that a boy, now a distinguished schoolmaster, whose name I shall not reveal, attended Windsor Races, and, catching a light-fingered gentleman red-handed in the act of picking his pocket, turned to and gave him such a tremendous thrashing that the purses of Etonians, it is said, were respected by thieves for a long time afterwards. He denies all memory of the incident, but as the act is thoroughly characteristic, I cannot help thinking he must have followed the counsel of Jowett, the Master of Balliol, to "make a compact with his memory not to remember everything."

There are some expeditions which, like great crimes, must be undertaken alone, for, in the first place, there is your own "counsel to be observed and kept secret," and, in the second place, two persons are more obvious than one to the eye of an enemy. To elude observation successfully is the main idea. The use of the bicycle was, as it always has been, I believe, forbidden at Eton. Consequently it occurred to me

that it would be a capital means of getting to Ascot. To procure someone to answer for you at "absence" was an easy matter: when your name was called he simply got behind a tall fellow, waved his hat in the air, answered "Here, sir," and the thing was done. The critical matter was the disguise. Having some knowledge of theatrical matters, a moustache matching the hair, which would bear a daylight inspection, was the first step; then a pair of spectacles, a "change" suit of dittoes, and a hat garnished with a village cricket-club ribbon completed the thin veneer under which the Eton grain dimly showed. These accessories were innocently conveyed in a towel, as though a bathe at Cuckoo Weir was my intent, to the trysting-place under the railway arches, where a man awaited me with the machine. It is astonishing what a convenient dressing-room a railway arch makes. I enteredan Eton boy, and emerged a nondescript. Fortified by the knowledge that few Etonians had learnt to ride the tall bicycle at that time, and by the unlikelihood of masters recognising me on that account, and tremulously secure in my specs and manly upper lip, I mounted the wheel and rode boldly back into Eton, down the street in full view of everyone, up through Windsor, and away towards Ascot. In those days the "bog-wheeler," as he was called,

didn't wish to do an "awful swat," the energy of the schoolboy was boundless, consequently Sunday was a popular day for walks into the country. In order to return in time for "absence" at six o'clock, if the destination was Ditton Park, the "Copper Horse" at the end of the Long Walk, or Queen Anne's Ride, the pace had to be good; and if Virginia Water was chosen, some of the distance was done at the double. To get rhododendron blossoms from Queen Anne's Ride wherewith to decorate one's rooms was an object for a walk, and there being an idea that to pick them was forbidden, the blossoms were invariably stowed away in your hat; then, when you hurried back to "absence," and doffed it in answer to your name, there was a floral cataract on to the stones; but I never heard of any boy getting into trouble for these larcenies.

Schoolboys are not as a rule poetically inclined, and therefore I do not expect to be believed; nevertheless it is a fact that some of us occasionally made Stoke Poges an object for a walk, and in that quiet churchyard, amid "the beetle's drowsy hum," under the shadow of that grey old church, with its finger "pointing upward to the sky," one of us would take a Gray from his pocket and read snatches from the *Elegy*, while something of the *genius loci*, the lazy,

brooding calm of the sun shining down on the moss-grown tombs, and the musical cadences of the old Etonian "sweetly crept into our imaginations" and affected our crude little souls. For a short time Sunday "questions," dull sermons, and even cricket and the river, would be forgotten, and we strayed like wide-eyed children into the garden of the immensities. To an outward observer we looked like conspirators hatching a deep-laid plot among the mounds of the dead, crouching together and talking in low tones, but in truth we were making our first clumsy flights in religion and philosophy, like newly-fledged aviators scarce skimming the ground of common life. The owner of the book was one Collier, a scholar with a penetrative mind, accessible to every impression, agile and alert in thought, a boy deservedly popular for his good-natured offices in times of stress; he would turn you out a copy of verses in a trice, with the proper number of false quantities to suit your poetical calibre, and in a style which would deceive the very elect. I often wondered whether my tutor ever suspected Collier's hand in my compositions; if he did, he winked at it, good man, for he never put me to the proof, in spite of the inadequacy of my explanations of my mistakes. Collier, had he lived, would have been a brilliant man, and one of Balliol's successes

under Jowett, but, alas! his name was added to the list of the victims of Sandford Lasher, for his boat was carried over the fall and he was drowned, to the profound regret of his many friends.

'Tis said that there is no fool like an old fool, but for cold-blooded, reckless folly give me a youth. There was a fellow at my tutor's with no great courage in his composition—he would duck at his first bullet, I am sure—to whom you had only to say, "I'll bet you don't do so-and-so." "What will you bet?" he would ask quickly, and, on the sum being named, he would slowly and deliberately survey his task and do it. Close by the boy's door a rain-pipe, leading down from the roof, was held in iron supports about a foot off the wall, and at about ten feet off the ground it disappeared into the wall. At this point it was protected by a *chevaux de frise* of spikes pointing downwards, to prevent people climbing up. It is there still. The bet was laid that he would not climb into the top windows by means of this rain-pipe; he took it, procured a chair, straddled over the spikes, and proceeded to swarm up the rain-pipe. It was built to carry water only, and the stanchions looked frail, but providentially they held firm, till he disappeared with a wave of the hand into the top-storey window, some fifty feet from the pavement. He blessed the honest builder who

had fixed that rain-pipe, and came downstairs looking a little pale. He pocketed the bet, remarking, with a slight tremor in his voice, "Well, that pipe's all right in case of fire." That was bravado, of course, for it was evident that he had been in a blue funk the whole time. That fool is still cumbering the earth with his folly, but he says he has learnt wisdom in his old age. I take leave to doubt that statement.

One H. P. Cholmeley was once standing in the street at my tutor's door talking, as the custom was when there was nothing better to do, when Athelstan Riley, a friend of his, descried him from an upper window. A six-pound dumb-bell lay conveniently near to hand, and, the temptation being great, that dumb-bell fell plumb on the pavement within some inches of Cholmeley, "just to make him jump." I never heard that this incident made any difference to their friendship. There is a providence which looks after children, drunkards, and—Etonians.

Temptation, like love at first sight, is irresistible, and he who does not yield to it swiftly loses one of the greatest charms of life. Walter Durnford was once seen from an upper window marching along the street to Chapel in his cap and gown. It was a thing he did daily, and there was nothing remarkable about it. But a fellow at my tutor's happened not to have

finished his milk at breakfast that morning. Shooting well in front of his bird, like a good sportsman, to allow for the motion of the quarry and the shot, the contents of the jug fell in a milky cataract straight on the master. Thoughtfully the fellow had run along the passage and poured the stream from someone else's room. Naturally this outrage raised a terrible rumpus, and the whole house was threatened with a general *pœna*, but the culprit lay low and said nothing, waiting for the imposition to be set before he gave himself up to justice. Rain was expected to fall alike on the just and the unjust, but, like many a threatening storm, it passed away without bursting, to the intense relief of the guilty one, whose dreams were haunted by shadowy visits to the head master.

C. Granville Kekewich was once sitting with others, working away quietly, and Arthur James, his tutor, was walking about the room, when a voice was heard from above, "Pretyman, shall I?" A reply was heard, "Yes, go on." And a large coal descended into the pupil-room through the skylight, amid a shower of broken glass. Arthur James dashed out, and intercepted the offender just as he was making his escape down the staircase, two steps at a time. "Please, sir," said he, "it slipped out of my hand!" What the punishment was history saith not.

I remember once being spurred by a wager to take a header off Windsor Bridge, little thinking at the time that I had a distinguished example in Arthur Hallam. The difficulty was to balance oneself on the railings before the leap; if you slipped and fell flat, well! it would have been very painful. As it was, the river being shallow, I barked my knuckles against the bottom, and rose with something of a headache.

In the early 'seventies the house on the other side of Common Lane, which afterwards became Mitchell's, was Rouse's. Owing to some inscrutable law of attraction between similar natures, all the rowdy characters in the school seemed to be collected in that one house. Farquharson, who won School Sculling, and rowed against us in the Jesus, Cambridge, boat at Henley in 1878; "Timmins" Smith; Cooper, of the loud trousers; Arthur Bingham Crabbe, of sporting propensities; Wakefield, the fast bowler with the curly head; and "Mad 'Unt" were some of their names. Hunt's window, out of which the sash was taken in the summer half, was nearly always decorated with the spoils of the chase, and was called Hunt's larder. On a string stretched across it, in full view of the street, depended an odd assortment of game, in season or out, it mattered not to him—teal, moorhen, partridges, rabbits; and now and then something

larger, skinned or plucked, suggested in its outline a pheasant or a hare. By a convenient exit, known only to the Rouseites, night excursions were made to Ditton Park and other preserves, and, by the skilful use of catapults and engines of destruction, tea and breakfast at Rouse's were converted into heavier meals. It was astonishing how easily some of those fellows fell asleep over their books in their division during the day. One day Hunt brought a dead crow into school and laid it on the desk. This roused the curiosity of the master. "Did you kill that bird?" "Yes, sir." "What did you kill it with?" "This, sir," said Hunt, baring a brawny arm. This was probably absolutely correct, for he could throw a stone with the force and accuracy of a catapult.

One one occasion, rumour had it that Hunt was over at Ditton Park in the dim hour of the morning before it was light. His quest was either ducks or ducks' eggs, which were only to be found on an island, so he doffed his clothes, laid them in a ditch, and swam across. He was engaged some time over his business there, and while so occupied he spied a keeper approaching from afar. He plunged in again, and with hasty strokes returned to the bank; but, alas! there was no time to robe himself, for the keeper was upon him, so he fled, mother-naked as he was. Picture to

yourself the unequal race between a keeper in velveteens, corduroys, and hobnailed boots, and a youth divested of every stitch of clothing! On sped the worshipper of the Goddess Diana swiftly across the plain, with delicate pink body shining with fresh water, brushing the soft grass with bare feet, and silently fleeing like a diaphanous ghost before the approaching day—a fit subject for a Leighton or a Poynter! Up the silent street he ran, a place as deserted as that which witnessed the ride of the beauteous Lady Godiva, before the curtains of the early boys' maid had ever been drawn, up through the well-known entrance, silent as a cat, till he found the hospitable shelter of his room.

The mode of carrying an umbrella in those days was to grasp it as near as possible to the point and swing the handle with a swagger behind you, but occasionally Bingham Crabbe would be seen marching with big strides into the country, carrying his umbrella in the middle with extra care. Outwardly it was an umbrella, but inwardly it was a gun, and it was from this cause that Crabbe's pockets invariably bulged when he returned from a walk.

A novel form of booby-trap was instituted one day at Rouse's. A canister of powder was placed on the table, a bath placed over the canister, and various

pieces of furniture piled on the bath, and when the occupant of the room was approaching the fuse was lit. The result was an explosion, a wreck of the room, and a great hole in the ceiling. We were accustomed at all seasons to hear strange sounds from over the way. Far into the night the popping of corks and the sounds of revelry would ascend into the starlit sky, and the lilt of choruses so Rabelaisian that our ancient apple-faced boys' maid, Wollard, used to declare herself scandalised, and that "sich things ought to be stopped," with which opinion some of us, still smarting from fractured windows for which we had to pay, smashed pictures, and broken sleep, cordially agreed.

But a Nemesis dogs the track of the delinquent schoolboy with more certainty and swiftness than in after life. These things could not last for ever, and nocturnal potations lead to heavy sleep in the morning. One day a member of this wild crew was missed in early school, and his name duly noted by the præpostor in his book. When taxed with his absence, like Peter, he denied it with an oath, and said he was there. The præpostor stuck to his guns for his own credit, and things began to look black for the Rouseite. Then several of his boon companions, with a hardihood worthy of a better cause, came forward to say

that they saw him in school, and pressure was put on others to manufacture evidence in his defence, but such quixotism as to tell a public lie to save a schoolfellow was too great a strain for the ordinary camaraderie of the school; the thing could not be brazened out, and the result was several vacancies in Rouse's house.

A story was current in the 'seventies of a boy high up in the school who, with the precociousness of youth, formed an attachment with a person of the opposite sex. How much of genuine romance there was in the affair it is impossible to say, for he hailed from across the water, where romance is said to be at a discount, nor did we ever learn the social status of the lady. His last half was drawing to a close, so with characteristic recklessness he invited her one day to tea at his "dame's." They were cheerfully discussing that meal when suddenly in marched "my dame," who was the house master. He was a bluff man, and comprehended the situation at a glance.

"Who is this person?" he asked. The boy replied without a blush:

"Oh, by the way, I forgot to mention it before, sir; may I introduce you to my wife!" The conversation then took a serious turn, after which madame was gravely and politely escorted to the street; then

"my dame" retired to his study to compose an agitated letter to certain transatlantic parents. Whether the lady could produce her marriage lines or not, whether she accompanied her youthful bridegroom to America, or whether, like Dido, she remained weeping her lost love upon the shore, has ever remained a mystery. In the words of Herodotus, "it is open to every man to adopt whichever view he deems the best."

It is curious how a pernicious fashion will suddenly descend on a school, run through it like measles, and then leave it purged of its ill-humour, perhaps in a better state than before. About the same time as, or a little time after, the riotous proceedings at Rouse's, a mania for gambling and tossing seized upon us in the same way as the mania for South African mines or rubber shares takes an older generation. Everyone, except the writer, who is strangely impervious to the gambling microbe, kept a book on every horse-race; sweepstakes were hastily organised on every event, and outside school one would hear, "Toss you for ten bob?" "Right." "Double or quits" —and sovereigns, thick as peas, flashed into the air to make or mar the hopes of the youthful punter. Money flowed easily, and he who followed Polonius's advice, neither to borrow nor lend, was at once considered a curmudgeonly fellow; and coin was lent with

the moral certainty that it would be never seen again. But with the disappearance of certain leaders of fashion this temporary insanity passed away, and the body politic resumed its normal habits, and we became content to take an interest in sporting events without putting all our pocket-money in jeopardy. At the same time this speculative passion, like other passions, left behind it many a sore heart and empty purse. There were anxious fathers and mothers, who could ill afford to keep a sporting son, dismayed at these wild ventures, wondering to what it would trend in the future, and fearing lest this was the beginning of a rake's progress.

After all, Eton was like the great world, subject to the same tastes and aberrations, and though I did not intend to write a sermon, my readers must pardon a moral reflection or so creeping in unawares.

CHAPTER VII

MASTERS

"The natures that give evidence of being the noblest are just those that most require education."—SOCRATES.

A MASTER may be anything to a boy, for the relations between them vary to almost any extent and ramify into fine shades of feeling. He may be a beast, a monkey, or a friend, and oftentimes all three at different periods of his pupil's career; you may hate him, tease him, or love him, according to the fashion or the circumstance of the moment, and this perhaps accounts for the widely-varied opinions of masters expressed by old boys after they have left school. Consequently any opinions expressed here must be taken to have been formed in the above fortuitous manner, and to be the outcome of perhaps some ridiculously casual incident.

For instance, nobody would have placed "Duppy," *alias* George Dupuis, in the category of popular masters. He did not excel in wit, like little Russell Day, neither had he an ingratiating manner; his very whiskers

suggested a hard soul, and he owed much of his discipline to the deep, rough voice with which he taught. Georgics were his thunderbolts, and when the air grew surcharged with ignorance, misconduct, or inattention, it exploded in, "Write out the 4th Georgic," a poem of some five hundred lines in length. He took no excuse, and he never let you off. It was as inevitable as an ocean wave, and overwhelmed you with the same impassive certainty. There was a certain standard of excellence, not very high, to which you had to conform, and if you failed, the storm broke on your luckless head. To his rules there were no exceptions, and some of them were illogically light; for instance, if you had lost your copy of verses for the week the punishment was to write out a particular Eclogue, a ridiculously mild affair, and accordingly you wrote out your Eclogue beforehand and reported your verses as "lost." An almost indecent repetition of this transparent ruse produced no effect, for he never altered his rule. Inflexibility was no bad quality in a master, for it extracted from us a certain average amount of work which others could not get, and you aways knew where you were with "Duppy." And yet, with all this apparent soulless and mechanical want of sympathy, he was a kind and tender-hearted man. One day in school I was suddenly seized with

an excruciating toothache, and, as if to set a seal on my misery, I was put on to construe, with the inevitable result of being told to sit down, with the usual punishment. At the end of school, to my surprise he told me to stay. He glared at me inquiringly. "There is something the matter with you!" I told him. "Poor boy," he said in the same tone as if he were setting me another punishment, "you shouldn't have been put on. You needn't do the punishment." I nearly wept with gratitude. Not content with this, he took me to his house and gave me some chloroform to put on the tooth, and ever since that day, in spite of Georgics and Eclogues, I have had a warm corner in my heart for George Dupuis.

Boys, as a rule, are unerring critics of each other, but they make great mistakes over the characters of their masters. The manner which a master assumes in school, partly to keep order, and partly as the defence of a sensitive nature against ridicule, and sometimes the outward sign of natural eccentricity, has much to do with it. The pedagogue has to break down the natural barrier of enmity with which the relationship between him and his pupil begins, and the boy has to see through the defensive, magisterial manner, and very often they mutually fail. The case of C. C. James is an abiding instance of an excellent

man misunderstood. Furnished by nature with a red beard and rugged exterior, a hesitating and unmusical utterance gave a spurious air of rudeness to his manner, which an apparent lack of any sense of humour rendered peculiarly uningratiating to the boys. They were entirely misled by these externals, and never saw, what appeared to me from a half's experience in his division, the impartiality, the inability to take a mean advantage, and the kindness which lay hid under a somewhat eccentric exterior, and no one to whom he extended his hospitality at breakfast could fail to remember the family affection and geniality which existed at the root of the man.

A memorable incident occurred just before my time, which shows how quickly the boys' resentment may be kindled against a master, who may be quite undeservedly unpopular. Above Stevens' shop in High Street was fixed the model of a ship in a glass case, which some merry and mischievous souls one day, on their way back from the Brocas, tore down for a lark. Mr. Stevens was undismayed, and defiantly re-erected the ship with the legend "Resurgam" attached to it. Old Mrs. Westbrooke, the fruiterer, who still lives opposite the house, declares that he hung the ship with Harrow colours. This challenge couched in Latin, this glove thrown down for none

but Etonians to take up, caused an immediate response, and an organised attack was made on the offending ship. "Stiggins" James, happening to be passing at the time, interfered, as was his duty to do, to protect the ship from further outrage, with the result that he was borne on the shoulders of enraged wet-bobs to Barnes Pool Bridge, hustled against the parapet—some say he was suspended over the water—and, but for the timely aid of Mr. Snow, who kicked his way through the crowd, he would have been put to the indignity of an immersion.

Of a different complexion was Francis Warre Cornish, my tutor; a delicate and refined scholar, whose appearance belied his profession, for he was the last man in the world you would take for a schoolmaster. His "was one of those heads which Guido has often painted—mild, pale, penetrating, free from all commonplace ideas of fat, contented ignorance looking downwards upon the earth—it looked forwards, but looked as if it looked at something beyond this world." Though Sterne applies this description to a monk, there was nothing monkish about my tutor; he was a thorough man of the world, and if he was apparently blind to some of our peccadilloes it was not from obtuseness, it was more from an artistic dislike of friction. He could strike, and that

firmly, if occasion demanded, but was reluctant to strike till he was absolutely obliged, and, if he suspected anything serious, he would sometimes give a friendly warning beforehand, which had as potent an effect as the direst punishment, and left a sweet savour of gratitude behind it. His methods were those of peaceful persuasion, and I have yet to learn that they were worse than swifter and more drastic ones, for his house, both in morals and manners, compared favourably with many others that I could name. Said I more, I might be accused of boasting. A salient point about him was that he always played the game. If you told him a fact in good faith he straightway believed you ; there was never a lurking suspicion left upon his mind that you might have lied ; and the consequence was that he got more truth out of the boys than other masters.

Once he caught me *flagrante delicto*, in the dead of night, scribbling a *pœna* with a pipe in my mouth : an outrageous breach of two rules. I threw myself on his mercy as regards the pipe, which of course he confiscated, but pleaded that I had no other time in which to do the *pœna*. "What a fool you are," said he, "sitting up like this and ruining your health." "How can I help it, sir, if Mr. —— will give me *pœnas?*" "Don't get *pœnas*," said he. "How far

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By Leslie Ward

have you got ?" "I'm in the last ten lines, sir." "Well, finish it up, and go to bed at once." Some people would vote this mistaken leniency, but what would have been the good of setting me an additional *pœna?* And should I have been the better for a swishing ? Perhaps, but I am inclined to think not. At any rate, it was some considerable time before I got another *pœna.*

With regard to my verses, bad as they were, he had very likely suspected that they were none of mine, but those of Collier, a clever friend who counterfeited all my native false quantities and mistakes, so he sent for me one day, knowing that I suspected that he knew the fact, but not a word was spoken. He asked me why my verses were so bad, seeing that I had had a poet in my family. Not being ready with the obvious quotation, "*Poeta nascitur, non fit,*" I replied that two poets do not usually occur in one family, and that verse-making was not in me. "Would you rather do prose instead ?" he asked. I was cornered, and had to accept the situation, and so an exception was made in my favour, and I was sent to "Swag" Thackeray for Latin prose; to my great advantage, as it turned out, for, first of all, I had to do the prose myself in his pupil-room, and, secondly, I really appreciated "Swag's" beautiful and scholarly correc-

tions to my clumsy sentences, though I shall be rated a prig for saying so. But of the wisdom of my tutor in substituting prose for verses there can be no doubt.

Just as jams are nauseous to some throughout life on account of the powders taken in them in early years, so the grinding juggernaut of verse-making at school stamps out of some natures all taste for poetry. The happy knack of stringing hexameters and pentameters together with ease is given to only a few, and is no real test of mental vigour. A man may toss you off a copy of mechanical verses on any given subject as easily as you fling a coin, and yet be a dull fellow after all, and it is surprising how long the world has bowed down to this pseudo-classical fetish. However, this comes with an ill grace from one who could never string two verses together in his life.

To return to my tutor: he rode us lightly on the snaffle, with the curb kept ever in reserve. He inspired us with no fear; but he did more, he carried with him into his comparative retirement as Vice-Provost, where he lives in the quietude of the Cloisters and the shadow of the Library, the affection of the pupils. Small wonder is it that now, years after his house has broken up, the past members of it meet annually in London to dine together and celebrate the old life spent under his guidance. It is the first

institution of its kind, viz. a house dining-club, and it owes its vigour to a large extent to the personality of our guest. It is not due to the fact alone that happily he is still with us that I can find nothing nasty to say about him.

It is not given to every master to keep order in his class, and the faculty for so doing is too subtle to be defined or described; perhaps it is best exemplified by the word personality. Mr. Thackeray, referred to above, had a somewhat stern exterior, assisted by spectacles and bushy eyebrows, but the boys measured the length of his foot to a nicety, uniting together to make as much noise as possible. I well remember, on my rounds as præpostor, the varied sounds which proceeded from some of the divisions in the New Schools; hoots and booing came from the rioters in "Swag's" division, and vociferous applause greeted a good saying of Wolley-Dod's, or a quiddity by Day. "Swag" possessed both character and personality to a considerable degree, but it did not happen to be the kind of personality which appealed to an unruly set of boys, and Thackeray in the quiet of his study and pupil-room was altogether different from the exasperated "Swag" in division. I seem to hear the low tones of his persuasive voice pointing out how much more

beautiful and poetical I could have made my crude prose. *There* was the real Thackeray, the scholar and the gentleman, as he appeared to those who saw him apart from the conflict and strife of school life, and there are few of us whose good wishes he did not carry with him into his retirement to the Rectory of Mapledurham, a place of peculiar charm and redolent with the memories of many a child of Eton.

From the foregoing it may be naturally inferred that the opportunities of relief from work were many and various, and an ingenious youth could easily obtain a partial immunity by playing off one master against another. The teaching was too much subdivided among the masters, and too much was required from the average individual boy. The latter statement may cause surprise, but I will maintain that none but the clever, or the exceptionally industrious, could *fully* satisfy the claims of each master, *e.g.* your tutor, your classical-division master, your mathematical master, your French master, and your science master; consequently a smattering of knowledge came to be accepted as being better than none at all, instead of a thorough grounding in fewer subjects. Added to this we had three half-holidays a week, during the afternoons of which we were not

supposed to work. "Sapping" was not taken as an excuse for not playing football.

"Whole holidays," writes Mr. Lyttelton, "were given for every Saint's Day and Royal anniversaries. Occasionally, but very rarely, two whole school-days would be wiped out in one week. Of course in the summer term the time for work was absurdly limited, but the same amount nominally exacted. It was freely scamped.

"In reference to this William Johnson once wrote (in June) at the end of some idle verses:

> 'O utinam veniant effusis nubibus imbres
> O utinam pueros ludere lympha vetet!
> Quinque dies ludunt; ludo socordia crescit:
> Grex piger ad libros imbre jubente redit?'

The last assertion is most disputable."

And as regards cribs he adds: "Nearly all the boys up and down the school used cribs, and it was a common thing to see in my dame's library a lower boy reading aloud a Juvenal crib to some six big fellows, who rapidly wrote the English of the hard words down on the margin. Occasionally a boy would be detected if he construed *Ranae*, the young, *pullis*, of a frog; then there would be a fuss, perhaps a punishment, and a confiscation of the Bohn volume; but no attempt whatever was made at extirpating the mischief.

The result was that scores left Eton unable to construe the simplest Latin or Greek author."

This raises a question of interest, in which I am bold enough to differ from so high an authority, though any opinion expressed here is necessarily that of a lay mind. It seems to me that the old worship of classical scholarship, to the almost total exclusion of other branches of knowledge, is gradually dying away, and that the growth of science during the last fifty years has made such claims on human intelligence that the classics can no longer hold their old place. The question is, how to preserve the classics for our use in education ?

I cannot help thinking that, for the average mind, the plodding method of ploughing through the dictionary and grammar to get the sense of a passage ; the halting in the midst of a resonant period, so that all sense of poetry and meaning is lost ; the meticulous conning of only a short section, losing thereby its artistic relation to the rest, is not a good one ; and the whole system of parsing, derivations, and the rest, will have to be discarded for something better and less cumbrous. Would a Frenchman learn his Shakespeare on such a plan, or would you tackle *Don Quixote* in the original with a Spanish grammar and a dictionary of the size

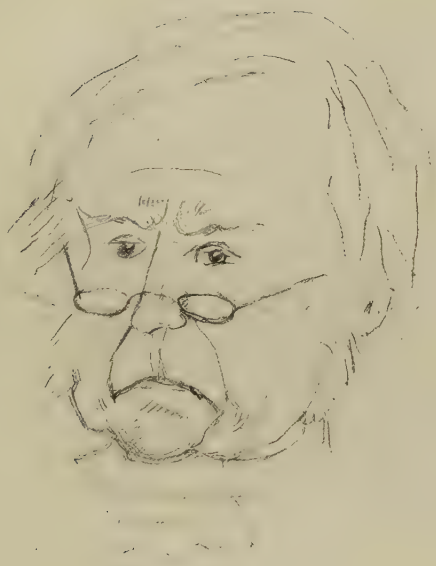
of a "Liddell and Scott"? The mere fact that Latin and Greek are dead languages does not seem to necessitate the teaching of them in this laborious manner, whereby the love of poetry and the interest in the story are crushed out of the unlucky student. There are good cribs and bad cribs, and I see no reason why a good translation, judiciously used in school, should not be a legitimate aid to the understanding of an author. After all, familiarity with the language is the chief end to be aimed at, and not to get at the various readings of obscure passages by the scholiast, or to fix in the mind some trivial exceptions to a general rule, like "Common are to either sex, Artifex and Opifex," excellent *memoriæ technicæ* though they were. To how many thirsty souls have the floodgates of Greek drama and poetry been opened by the beautiful translations of Professor Gilbert Murray and others?

However, this is rank heresy, and only the opinion of an individual who has dimly perceived in his youth the glories of the ancients shining fitfully through the cumbersome barriers of grammar and dictionary.

It was in the decade of the 'seventies that the old school of masters died off, and a new era began. They were a quaint crew, with the characteristics and habits of a bygone age. The armour of defence I have alluded to above had thickened by age into a horny shell of

eccentricity and mannerism, under which the real man lay hid: the humanity was lost in the schoolmaster. They had grown grey in the service, and had become as much creatures of routine as chief clerks in old-established firms. Their dress was an indication of this. For a master to appear in and about Eton in any other garb than the tall hat, white tie, and black coat, would have been an outrage on the community, and to meet a master in the holidays in a light suit and coloured tie caused a mild shock of surprise to an Etonian. It is true that they were for the most part parsons. If I do not adequately describe each one of this queer group, it is from want of personal experience.

There was "Johnny" Yonge, who rode solemnly about the country on his bony white horse, "Gehazi." When you met him on the road, he gazed at you with those inscrutable blue eyes, wistfully inquiring, not whether you were a boy, but whether you were a false quantity, and, if satisfied that you scanned, he passed on, revolving classical quotations in his head and dreaming of Mount Olympus. His picture, more a portrait than a caricature, by the hand of E. C. Tennyson d'Eyncourt, now Metropolitan magistrate, still exists enshrined in glass on the walls of the classroom where he taught, to remind a younger generation of



THE REV. J. E. YONGE

From the mural drawing by E. C. TENNYSON D'EYNCOURT.
Copied by MARION COLERIDGE.

what manner of man he was. If the right sort of juvenile artist could be encouraged, what a gallery of history and character might we not have to adorn those bare walls! But the pencil, as in this case, has to be spontaneous, and encouraged youth is apt to be self-conscious. But we thank the authorities for preserving from the wall-stainer this memorial of the old man.

Then there was Wolley-Dod, called "Wollah Doddah" in imitation of his speech, a gentleman, a sportsman, and a character. Over six feet in height, thin, and long-limbed, he looked like an elongated Lord Palmerston, with his spruce side-whiskers and clean-shaven mouth. His gait was an aristocratic swagger, with which he strode along, swinging his arms with almost a jaunty air, and his march up Chapel to his seat was a thing to remember. As everything about him was tall, including his house, his son, and his daughter, so the key of his division door, which he used to swing depending from the little finger of his right hand, was the longest in the school. A story hangs to that key. Grenville-Grey, happening to be seated just in front of his desk, had gone fast asleep. You might slumber peacefully at a distance from Wolley-Dod and not be noticed, but under his very nose was a different matter. Dod took up the

key and, reaching forth with his long arm, struck poor Grey on the head with the key six times, accentuating the sentence, "Wáke úp, Grénville Gréy, Cáptain of the Bôats!" The autocrat of the river had a headache that evening.

Dod was nothing if not rhetorical. His habit was to intersperse the lesson with stories and illustrations of his own, which, coming as they did as a pleasant interlude to the work, were greeted with hearty applause and choruses of "Hear, hear, sir!" These were but feebly suppressed, for he loved a responsive division, and I well remember the vociferous and prolonged cheering which greeted a casual reference of his to a tall man who lived in a tall house and had a tall daughter. Certainty and system are great benefits in this changeable world, and we blessed his lenient and unbroken rule of never exacting more than six or eight lines from each of us at a saying-lesson. Consequently, like scouts, we mapped out the unknown country into sections, and each learnt his fragment, and when we came to the end of that, we gave him the signal by humming and hawing, and he always flew to the rescue by putting on the next man. It was all done with the gravity of augurs, only we refrained from the sacrilegious wink. One day a wretched "Tug," whose memory I revile to this day

though I have forgotten his name, raced away incontinent far beyond his allotted space, and the whole division was put to the utmost consternation. We counted heads and tried to reform our arrangements, to no purpose whatever, because the next two or three, who were put on in their order, broke down hopelessly. We were all at our wits'-end, till at last one fellow boldly started to repeat the section he had learnt, though it was out of its order, and to our intense relief Wolley-Dod sat like an image, covering his face with his long, bony fingers, and said nothing as he watched the *tesseræ* of our pattern falling into place with amused sympathy. We gave that "Tug" a mighty bad time afterwards, and the offence was never repeated. If he did not teach us much, at least Wolley-Dod was a very popular master.

Speaking of saying-lessons reminds me of the simpler method we employed when in Austen Leigh's division. For some reason or other he used to hold early school in his own pupil-room at his house. Under the projection of his rather high desk the first boy would stick into a crack in the wood the printed pages torn out of the book, and it was astonishing how our memories returned to us when we sought inspiration from our toes. Then the lag of the division, having struggled through with the right amount of hesitation,

would surreptitiously pocket these "aids to reflection." This was forgotten one unlucky day and the fraud discovered, and then it became apparent what shocking memories we had from want of practice. "Flea" Leigh was a successful teacher in other respects, for he had an incisive way of slowly emphasizing his remarks, as who should say, "Put that in your pipe and smoke it," and then he would gaze round the division with protrusive under-lip to watch the effect of his words; and when it took the form of, "The ignorance of this division is positively appalling," we thought it time to mind our p's and q's. And when he transfixed us with, "Write out and translate the lesson—on broad-rule paper—with accents and stops—and bring it to me at one o'clock—and the next time it occurs I shall decidedly complain of you"—life began to lose a deal of its charm.

One morning, one Cooper, of Rouse's, turned up at early school in trousers of the loudest pattern; huge red checks, a *dernier cri* of the fashion of the day, adorned his not very lengthy limbs. Austen Leigh fixed him with an astonished stare. "Cooper, where did you get those trousers?" "Tom Brown's, sir." "They are an outrage on respectability. Go back to your dame's, and come back at once in a pair of subfusc hue, and if I see them again I shall stop your

leave. Now go!" It was generally reported that Cooper had to borrow a pair of trousers quiet enough to suit Austen Leigh in his then mood.

Then there was "Tolly" Wayte, a mild and kindly teacher, looking like a cultivated gardener, with his beard, shaven upper-lip, and massive head which contained a knowledge well-nigh encyclopædic. He carried an impassive dignity about him, which made him respected. A man who could successfully play three games of chess at one time with his eyes blindfolded was a mental wonder.

"Jimmy" Joynes, too, of whom I do not recollect an evil word spoken—a Christian soul, whose benevolence was stamped on him by the melancholy smile which he carried in his pale face, and whose speech was characterised by strongly burred r's and a slow drawl—he, the kindliest of men, by some irony of circumstance, once flogged a noble lord thrice in one day! What the offences were which merited so drastic a punishment I never heard, but heinous they must have been. It is a curious turn of fortune which often places the most peaceful of men under the necessity of taking violent action in the crises of life, and so it is with the mildest of schoolmasters. When I was a new boy he hailed me across Keate's Lane with, "Come heerr, you boy, what's yourr naame?" I

was frightened to death, thinking I had transgressed some rule, and gave my name in a trembling voice. "I thought so," he drawled, "ye're verry like yrr maajurr." And he dismissed me with one of those smiles which made me feel as if I had received a blessing. This was my one and only dealing with "Jimmy Jaines." And yet this staid old gentleman was said to have performed in his youth the astounding feat of running round the bevelled edges of the walls of a fives court, and jumping the pepper-box at the end!

Another quaint person was "Hoppy" Daman, called thus on account of the springy gait with which he walked. Being short in stature, and a winner of walking-races in his youth, he had acquired the long stride which necessitated an up-and-down motion of the head. He was a great believer in athletic exercises, and during the time in which we did the sums which he set us in the old Mathematical Schools, at the end of Keate's Lane, he would sally forth into the little garden which lay at the back, and rush up and down with the garden-roller, or go through vigorous evolutions with a heavy pair of dumb-bells, and then he would return with a smile of satisfaction, saying, "I feel better now." He was no respecter of books, for at the beginning of school he would hurl them at our heads, dealing them round the room like a pack of

cards, and if you missed catching the "Hamblin Smith" or "Euclid," he would yell out "Butterfingers!" To drum into our thick heads the important fact that things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another, he would tell a story of a Windsor soldier, who wished to prove he was of the same height as a London soldier, sending a comrade of equal stature with him to London to measure himself against the London soldier, the angle A, B, C, being "the man who went in the train"; and his wrath was kindled greatly when a boy suggested that there might be a railway accident on the way. He could stand a deal of juvenile chaff with good-humour, but there was always a point beyond which you could not go; after that he was adamant, and the punishment fell with certainty, and there was no reprieve. But there was much that was lovable in his quaint, buoyant eccentricity.

In my time there were four real dames left: Mis Gulliver, Madam de Rosen and Mrs. Drury, who kept small houses, and Miss Evans; and the greatest of these was Jane Evans. The history of the house has been ably and exhaustively written by Major Gambier Parry, but the characters of the Evans family have been limned with a sure hand by Mr. Lyttelton, the present head master.

"Without the disorderly genius of her sister, she yet has always shown a singular capacity for judging a boy's character, and the same royal disregard for logic in the reasons which she would allege either for not taking a boy, or for getting rid of him. But she was gifted with a pre-eminent combination of humour and serenity. No trouble, or complication of troubles, prevented her from seeing the ludicrous side of things, and her power of narrative was simply delightful. She never forgot an old boy, and never remembered what year he was in her house; and again, while he was in her charge she would ceaselessly think of him and watch him; then, if a collapse came, she washed her hands of him, and, satisfied that she had done her best, refused to let the tragedy disturb her rest any more. Similarly, she never followed her boys' after-careers. Certainly the present vagaries of fifty-four sons of London West-Enders were a sufficient tax on anyone's sympathies.

"The governing of the house was conducted on an almost unique principle. Miss Evans never set any punishments, and made no rules. There was one in nominal existence, that no boy was to go into another's room after evening prayers, 9.30 P.M., but it was frequently transgressed. Already, by 1868, there was a strong tradition of self-government sprung up, of

which she used to ascribe the beginning to my brother Neville, captain about 1863–4. Before that time there is no doubt that it was an uncommonly rough place, but then 'Beeves' (old Mr. Evans) was virtual ruler instead of nominal. Miss Jane's skill lay in her managing to infuse a spirit of loyalty into the top boys, and making them feel that the good conduct of the house depended on them, as it certainly did, and the result was marvellously successful."

This system of self-government was largely carried into effect in other houses in the 'seventies, and was, and I hope always will be, one of the characteristics of Eton life. We do not possess a crystallised monitorial system, but we have the kernel of it in the delegated responsibility given to the upper boys, which is in itself of great educational value.

Seldom does a master go through his career at Eton without some nickname becoming attached to him, and by that nickname he is known for the rest of his life. What Etonian ever thinks of the Reverend F. E. Durnford? Few, indeed, ever remember that "Judy's" initials were F. E.

But there was one single exception to the general rule. I never heard that Mr Edmond Warre, as he then was, ever had a nickname. I remember one

fellow, smarting from a *pœna* set by him, calling him a "king of beasts," but that epithet, when analysed, appears to be a certain tribute to his leonine qualities. Any epithet would have to be a superlative, because he loomed so large on our youthful horizon. It was not his scholarship, though that was considerable, which appealed to us boys—I speak as one who was never in his division—so much as his splendid strength of character and body, his resonant and appealing voice, and his commanding presence. Such a man, had he not been a schoolmaster, would have inevitably taken the lead in any other walk of life, but his gifts were peculiarly fitting for the career he chose. Formed, both in character and appearance, in a heroic mould, he became at once the chief of the assistant-masters, and the example to the boys of what a man should be. His brilliant and strenuous command of both the volunteers and the boating world increased the sphere of his influence to all sections of the school, so that unconsciously he became identified with the school itself, and a living instance of that indefinable quality, the Eton spirit. Such a strong personality had no difficulty in enforcing on us that discipline and work which produce the best results. When that blue eye of his fixed you from behind those gold-rimmed spectacles—he wore an eye-glass, they say, in his

youth—as you sat at your oar, you sat up, braced your chest, and prepared to put your last pound on when the time came; and when he found fault with you in those deep, impassive tones you began to feel that your rowing career was not all beer and skittles. When, clad in that uncomfortable light-grey uniform and helmet to match, with a clumsy rifle in your right hand, you heard that same clear voice giving the word of command, somehow you determined that it would not be your fault if your company did not prove the smartest of all. He had a way with him, had Warre. Such was he as assistant-master, and it was fitting that he should have succeeded to the Headmastership. And now that he is installed as provost of our old Foundation, we still regard him with affection as our figurehead, and as the mellowed example of a splendid and strenuous career.

I will not enter into the vexed question whether there is too much homage paid to the athlete at the modern public school, or whether an athletic training is essential for the making of a good head master, but it is certainly an element which increases the respect paid to him by the boys, for they feel that he enters into all phases of school life, and takes an interest in their play as well as their work. The three last heads of Eton—Dr. Hornby, Dr. Warre, and Mr.

Lyttelton—were all distinguished athletes in their youth, and are fine examples of what a good head master should be.

J. J. Hornby was captain of the Eton Eleven, rowed in the Oxford Eight, and obtained a first-class degree. Quiet, dignified, and with an abiding sense of humour and a masterly gift of diplomacy, he could always be counted on to do the right thing. Whatever went on in that mysterious conclave called "Chambers" we knew not, but a feeling filtered through to us that in the President of that Council we had an absolutely fair and just arbiter of our destinies. As far as an outsider can judge, in his conflicts with the masters he never took action unless it became obvious that the welfare of the school required it. He had to deal with a difficult period of transition. There was the old Conservative fossil element, and the younger Radical element, tinged in places with Socialistic ideas, and they had to be somehow reconciled with each other, and it is to the lasting credit of Hornby that, so many points of difference becoming acute during his régime, there were so few wigs on the green. He was no orator, for his speeches and sermons were so full of obvious commonsense as to be a trifle dull, but the real power of the man lay in his delicate sense of irony.

In my last summer half, the weather being hot, we formed a solemn deputation to the Head, as much with a view of "drawing" him as to pursue our quest, to ask his permission to wear white tall hats. I seem to remember the eloquent George Curzon and "Professor" C. M. Smith as our spokesmen, into whose speeches some of us interjected a point here and there. Hornby listened to us with patient surprise expressed in his uplifted eyebrows; then a quizzical expression stole over his face as he gave us our answer. "No, no," he said in his usual monotone, "I am afraid it won't do. You wouldn't look well in white hats. Besides, you might be mistaken for book-makers." We were fairly laughed out of court. The idea of the great George Nathaniel or Grenville Grey or, for the matter of that, any of us being taken for bookies was so ludicrously preposterous that we affected to treat it as the Head's excuse for not granting our request. We protested against such a sumptuary law, but he was firm, and some of us regretted that we hadn't adopted the fashion without leave, for then perhaps he would not have interfered.

Hornby's dislike of interference has been rated by some as misplaced leniency, but I am sure that it is better to interfere too little than too much. Discipline can be maintained without a mechanical

severity, and a careful discrimination of penalties is surely the wisest course. We had advanced considerably since the "I'll-flog-you-sir" days of Keate.

It was a tradition in the school, and a good one too, that, however exasperating a boy might be in his conduct, a master must never, under any circumstances, strike him in anger; his remedy was to complain to the head master. One day the master who taught "Stinks," and who was no giant, demanded from a boy a Georgic which had been previously set him. The boy was probably very provoking, for the master lost his temper and struck him on the head. The boy retaliated with a blow which sent the master reeling back among his glasses and retorts, and the upshot was a complaint to the Head. Hornby maintained the tradition, and the matter ended with mutual apologies, and I am told the boy was let off the *pœna*. Peace was restored, the storm blew over, and I do not remember any increase of violence among the boys, or any extra difficulty in keeping order in consequence of this leniency. Had the boy struck first, Hornby's decision would have been very different.

A case once happened of a big boy in his last half, who had formerly been a contemporary at Eton with a newly-fledged master, the latter being full of the

rigid enthusiasm of the new broom and determined to sweep clean. The boy's brother, a graduate well known to the tutor, visited Eton one day, and, desiring to dine at the Christopher Hotel, called on the tutor, who chanced to be away, and left a note on his table explaining that he was giving his brother a dinner at the hotel. Happening to be an old college friend of the master, he called on him also on the way to dinner, and casually mentioned what he was going to do. The master, knowing of the tutor's absence, became inquisitive as to the "leave" of the boy, and ascertained what had been done. Not content with that, he went to the hotel at the dinner hour, and satisfied himself as to the boy's presence there by seeing him through the window. Next day the boy was sitting quietly in eleven-o'clock school, when one of his sixth-form friends marched in with a grin on his face and the usual formula: "Is —— in this division? He is to stay!" The boy was amazed, not having an idea of what he had done to deserve complaint, so he flew to his tutor and ascertained that the dinner at the "X." was the offence. The brother's note had somehow got concealed under some exercises on the tutor's table, and he had never read it, otherwise he would never have endorsed the complaint. Armed with an explanatory note from his tutor, the boy

hastened to the head master, whose only expression at having been kept waiting some fifteen minutes was an extra elevation of the eyebrows. The accused then presented the note with an apology, and poured forth an indignant explanation of the facts. Hornby listened patiently till the end of the story, and then he said: "Under the circumstances I don't think Mr. —— need have taken so much trouble in the matter. How is your father?" And as the boy went out of the room he added with a smile: "The next time you dine at a hotel perhaps you had better get the *proper* leave."

No doubt a technical breach of the rules had been committed, and a strict disciplinarian would have punished the boy, but Hornby saw that the master had taken an unfair advantage, and that was a thing he would never encourage. He never would flog a big boy if he could help it, and then only when a *pœna* would do no good. Serious offences he punished, and punished severely, but in his decisions he never lost sight of the principle that punishment was not the automatic result of the breach of rules, but remedial in its purpose, looking rather to the future of the boy and the general state of the school. If we may take an analogy from criminal records in the last hundred years, we shall find that on the average the reduction

and mitigation of sentences has gone hand in hand with a marked diminution of crime.

His aloofness and attention to detail in work, mentioned elsewhere, were faults which no doubt prevented him from knowing so well as his successors what was going on in the school, but that very detachment was a useful quality when a decision came before him, for it enabled him to approach every question with an absolutely unbiassed mind.

Like Miss Evans he never forgot an old boy, and would put a name to a face at once. I met him, some thirty years after I had left, witnessing a boat race, and though he had not seen me in the interval he instantly addressed me by name.

His memory will always be cherished as that of a kindly, just, and courteous English gentleman.

CHAPTER VIII

FOURTH OF JUNE

"Carving with elbow nudges."—WILLIAM JOHNSON.

I SUPPOSE that when a savage dresses himself up with paint and feathers on some state occasion he is only obeying the same ineradicable instinct of human nature which prompts the custom of the freemason to don aprons and ribbons, the parson to assume bright robes, and the judge to retain the historic costume of a cardinal of the Middle Ages, to whose office he in a measure succeeds. We are accustomed to see women dressed in bright colours, but fashion, as well as climate, has enjoined a comparatively dull hue for male attire; nevertheless, there are times when the quiet and retiring man rushes with a wild joy into the bravery of fancy dress. Gorgeous theatrical mounting of plays, and the recent rage for pageants are instances of this instinct for make-believe by means of costume, and we are still children to whom the fascination of finery is enduring.

There used to be few fancy-dress balls for which some

old Etonian would not ransack cupboard and drawer and produce a dusty old Fourth of June hat, prink the flowers, and furbish up the gold-lace border, send the gay shirt and white ducks to the wash, and probably let out the waistband of the latter with a sigh; then he would squeeze his shoulders into the jacket, and step forth a decorative jack-tar for the delectation of the ladies. His brass or gold sleeve-links were engraved with the crossed oars, the "E.A." denoting Eton Aquatics, and the Royal Crown, which tradition tells that George the Third gave members of the boats exclusive permission to wear; and it is probable that the turn-out was not the least effective at the dance. You cannot glorify a soldier; the glitter of his full-dress uniform is part of his stock-in-trade, and as important as the striking vestments of a Church dignitary, but that of an A.B. sailor of old time takes kindly to a little artistic decoration. There are few dresses more becoming to a good-looking, well-built young man than the Fourth of June uniform of the *Defiance*. There is something about this sailor's costume which conveys the suggestion of perennial youth; perhaps it is in the short jacket and white linen, or perhaps the association may be traced to the nursery.

Montem, that carnival of costume and highway

robbery, in which "salt" was demanded from the casual wayfarer—tradition runs that the king was stopped on Windsor Bridge and "salt" peremptorily but respectfully requested, and that he good-humouredly responded to the tune of five pounds—my grandfather being one of the extortioners—Montem, I say, has long since become historical. Election Saturday, a similar institution to the "Fourth," was abolished in 1871; let us then cling to the one festival in which Eton may dress herself up and go a-maying. Even the sober dignity of Sixth Form is not exempt from the tyranny of the tailor, for they have to don knee-breeches, wherein to spout their speeches to the Provost, Head master and the assembled multitude in upper school. As a preparation for this ordeal in my time, the services of Frank Tarver as coach were usually resorted to; he was the mentor in matters dramatic, and indeed it would not have been a bad thing if the whole school had partaken of his teaching in rhetoric and elocution. How many Etonians have been pitchforked into the world, to fill important positions in which the art of speech-making is essential, without a notion of how to stand and face an audience, how to manage the voice, or how to emphasize a phrase with an appropriate gesture? Even the art of reading aloud is neglected, and I have heard the noblest passages of Scripture so

murdered by parsons at the lectern that it was well-nigh impossible to follow even with an open Bible, and this from the lack of a few simple lessons in elocution. There are few men who have never had occasion to make a speech in public, and seeing that oratory is seldom a matter of instinct or heredity, at least in England, why should not a simple training in elocution be a necessary part of public-school teaching?

Outside "Pop" our only training was the House Debate, and that consisted of speeches delivered in jerky sentences across the table of the Boys' Library of a Saturday night; this helped us in a measure to think on our feet, but gave us no facility in addressing a large audience. Our very juvenile debates ran somewhat on the following lines: We preserved all the outward decorum of a deliberative assembly, in which our chairman was always addressed as "Mr. President." He would first call on Mr. Brown to open the debate on—say—the character of Napoleon. Brown would then rise with modest dignity, drawing from his pocket some notes hastily compiled from Erckmann-Chatrian and other historic works, and deliver his opinion, interspersed with copious pauses filled in with, "Let me see," "What was I going to say?" Then Smith would interpolate, "Up,

Guards, and at 'em! spit it out, old man; don't be shy," which would draw down the retort of, "Shut up, you ass! how can I speak if you interrupt?" Then the president would rap on the table with a paper-knife. "Order, gentlemen! Mr. Smith, you will have your turn presently." He could always keep order by threatening to call on you to speak. Smith, who had not intended to speak at all, would then seize on a piece of broad-rule paper and scribble down some notes for the coming ordeal, while Brown dilated on the curses of conscription till he wound up with, "I don't think I can add any more." "Hear! hear!" from the rest of the house. Then Mr. Jones, the clever one, hot from Carlyle, would rise and expatiate on the "unutterable chaos" produced in Europe by Napoleonic ambition, and plaintively allude to childless mothers and the sacrifice of human life; even the average stature of the Gallic race had been permanently reduced by these "bloody" wars.

This would produce a protest. "Was the hon. member in order in using such language?" Jones was never at a loss. "I was simply using the term in its epexegetical sense." Only a few, and they but dimly, had any notion of what "epexegetical" meant, but we were always impressed with the mental agility of Jones. Generally Napoleon would be pretty roughly

handled till Robinson rose, who always differed from everyone. He had no patience with people who ran down the army—he was going into the army himself —all countries had become great by warlike means. Look at Rome. Napoleon was a great man because he had nearly conquered the world, he had rebuilt Paris, codified the law, &c., in short, he was quite a decent sort of chap.

Then Smith, who thought he had been forgotten during the speeches of Jones and Robinson, would be called upon by the president, in spite of "Beastly shame! All right, I'll not forget this," muttered in an undertone. He would rise and spread out his broad-rule paper. "Let me see; do I agree with Mr. Jones? Oh yes I do. He said," &c. &c. His intention was to disagree with most of the speeches because he thought it more clever to disagree, but after sitting on the fence, and hanging on to his speech like grim death, he usually ended by agreeing with everyone with glorious inconsistency, because he had forgotten to put down the objections he intended to make. Smith fully prepared was a strange performance, but Smith unprepared was like Blondin without his pole.

Such was the only training in elocution which we had in the 'seventies. When, therefore, we assembled

in Upper School to see the great impassive swells in the Sixth Form, clad in dress coats and knee-breeches, declaiming fragments of the classics before an array of dignitaries with the fervent gesticulations and vivacity of old stagers, we recognised with astonishment the work of Frank Tarver. When some quiet, studious little colleger who was only known as a "sap," cast aside his shyness, and, with but an occasional halt, gave us a dim idea of the humour of a Dogberry or a Sneer, we were amazed, and cheered accordingly.

Tarver was greatly proud of his elocution, and was always open to be "drawn" in that direction during our French lesson. If it were possible to pronounce the words on purpose more vilely than usual, we did it, and he would interfere with nerves on edge as at a scraped slate-pencil. "Stop, stop!" he would cry; "that is not the way to pronounce it. Now listen." And then he would recite it *ore rotundo*, upon which we would applaud and say how fine it was, and ask him to go on. He, nothing loath, would continue, carried away by the swing of the language, till much of the school time was consumed. Though our Eton French was not very extensive under his tuition, he certainly showed us how musical the language could sound—under certain circumstances!

But to return to the Fourth of June. The cricket in Upper Club in the afternoon was rather a full-dress affair, carried on in the presence of a band and strolling spectators, the topic of conversation being not so much the issue of a one-day's match as the form displayed by the Eton team, and the chances of certain wearers of "twenty-two" caps of getting their "flannels" and playing at Lord's. Next to the Eton and Harrow match it is the largest open-air meeting where Etonians gather together, where greybeards, who haven't seen each other for years, meet and talk over old times and discuss their contemporaries. Sometimes it is an unprophesied success in life. "Did you think he had it in him? I thought he was a bit of a 'scug.' I remember licking him once because he hadn't washed his neck." Sometimes the talk turns on one of fortune's derelicts. "I wonder what happened to Brown?" "Oh, don't you know? A bit too fond of the battle. There was a row about it in India, and he had to come home; then he tried being a 'bookie' for some time, but wasn't sharp enough to keep his end up. The last I heard of him he was driving a cab in London—wanted to drive Jones for nothing, for old sakes, but Jones made him take a sovereign all the same." Such comments on life may be

overheard in a casual conversation between old school-fellows.

Here you may see the diplomat, the warrior, the financier, the noble, and the divine, being bearled by their sons in the bravery of button-hole and white waistcoat round the familiar haunts of Poet's Walk, and the mature angler will magnify by many pounds the pike he caught in Fellow's Pond, and the effect it produced on his digestion. And then, to those who are historically minded, a stroll round that upper gallery of the Cloisters, where engraved, drawn, and even caricatured, the great ones of Eton hang enshrined. Here you may wander in cool silence, and muse on the worthies of past time.

Here Sir Henry Wotton, the greatest of the provosts, an incomparable letter-writer, poet, ambassador to Venice, friend of the best spirits of his time, whose warning to the Church remains enshrined in his epitaph, "*Disputandi pruritus, ecclesiarum scabies*," gazes at you with critical, but not unkindly, eyes in the musty old engraving.

Next to him, his predecessor, Sir Henry Savile, the "extraordinary handsome man, no lady had a finer complexion," whose creamy pallor may be verified by a look at the oil portrait of him in the provost's lodge, the scholar, the translator of the Bible, student of

St. Chrysostom, a bookworm in every line. His eye has not the bright inquiring look of Wotton, the diplomatist, but the quiet lustre of contemplation. One can fancy him saying, "Give me the plodding student. If I would look for wits, I should go to Newgate."

Then Dr. Arne, seated at the spinet, with the corners of his mouth drawn down as if he smelt a bad smell, the effect perhaps of church music upon an emotional nature, yet with a dash of pride as he looks down his nose at the obedient fingers.

Shelley, too, with the dreamy eyes of a girl, wistfully gazing out of the portrait and translating common objects into poetical phantasy, his dishevelled hair and negligent collar typical of his wayward nature. Mr. Nugent Bankes has described the scorn of the average Etonian for the budding satirist; small wonder was it that the young poet, who doubtless loafed most profitably, became the butt of his companions, and a safe "draw" on account of his ungovernable rages. His is not the face of an athlete, but that of a boy of imagination, whose character is well described by John Moultrie:

> "Pensive he was, and grave beyond his years,
> And happiest seemed when, in some shady nook
> (His wild sad eyes suffused with silent tears),
> O'er some mysterious and forbidden book
> He pored until his frame with strong emotion shook."

Not far off hangs a contrast in character, the neat portrait of Mackworth Praed, with silky hair flowing in studied negligence, the poet of the ballroom, whose well-dressed verses delighted a former age, and which may be regarded in a measure as the prototype of the *Bab Ballads*.

Dr. Keate, a flogger of many delinquents, and Dr. Goodall are portayed in silhouette; the one, a short, sturdy figure, a combination of Napoleon and a washerwoman, with cocked hat worn square and apron flowing to the ground; the other, a courtly gentleman, arrayed point device even to the bunch of seals depending from his fob, and hugging his cane under his elbow as he hurries along with short steps; no florescent details here, but the bare character in outline of two great head masters.

Many Church dignitaries are here, but none more typically Etonian than the handsome, alert, young Bishop Selwyn, looking equally ready to "row a match" with you, or show you the way of salvation. His figure is full of energy, and is radiant with the gospel of cheerful effort as he leans lightly on the Bible. Gladstone, with clasped hands, tensely confronts an opponent, and Lord Salisbury, bowed with the weight of European affairs, gazes into the future with a sad prophetic eye.

Thomas Gray, holding a piece of paper in an exquisitely feminine hand—is it a matchless ode or one of his charming letters from abroad to Mr. West or his mother?—with large, contemplative eyes and a sad pensive look, which makes one wonder whether all poets in those days had large eyes, or whether artists gave them such because they wrote poetry.

Henry Fielding, the great Etonian novelist, lawgiver, too, and philanthropist, is drawn by Hogarth with no flattering hand. His bewigged profile looks like a benevolent, and at the same time satirical, nutcracker, indicating truly the character that said sharp things, but did kindly acts.

Lord Robert Manners, the hero of George Crabbe's "Village," the bright, young, handsome, naval captain, killed in battle in 1782, and typical of so many other Etonians, and one excuses Crabbe's somewhat fulsome praise of him from a semi-domestic position if he really was so beautiful as Sir Joshua makes him.

It is well to pause and take stock of these leaders of men, and to speculate on how much or how little each of them owed his success to his old school, and whether or not some little stimulus given, or lesson learnt, roused the energies towards climbing the peaks of life.

Your duty towards the past, however, is not ex-

hausted till you have strolled into College Hall and viewed the portraits of those distinguished *alumni* who have secured a place in that select gallery; and finally, at the foot of the stairs, you find that battered monument of our ancestors which will outlast, let us hope, all Water Companies and such makeshifts of artificial purification, the College Pump. Its brown iron handle is smooth from the grasp of countless generations, and the edges of its stone trough worn by the lustrations of "Tugs" innumerable, long since gone to their rest. A few strokes, and out gushes such water, pure from nature's filter, and so cold that, like that of a mountain spring, it seems to taste of the rock. You may say with Apemantus: "Here's that which is too weak to be a sinner, Honest water which ne'er left man i' the mire." Perhaps it is the rain of your father's time which has percolated by slow degrees through the hard sponge of the earth till it has trickled into the depths below, for no one knows how long such vintage has been laid down in bottle, but its crust it has dropped long ago, and it has a tang of age about it.

But you did not quench your thirst at this spring, for there was tea, to be had either at Layton's up Windsor, or at "my tutor's" in a boys' room. If the latter, it was a "sock" tea, furnished with delicacies

from Barnes Brown, cakes from Atkins's, and, most important of all, strawberries from Mother Lipscombe. Sometimes the latter were bought in the street in pottles, ingenious cornucopias invented in the interest of the seller, whereby a few showy specimens at the top covered the poorness of the fruit beneath. Out of these, with the addition of cream, a tolerable strawberry mess could be obtained, but not so luxurious as that garnished with the ice-cream of Messrs. Layton.

Soon the street begins to look bright with gay ribbons, white ducks, and gold lace, sported by many a jolly young waterman, some of them looking a trifle shy and uncomfortable in their finery, but this wears off so soon as they take their seats in the boat and are supported by their comrades. The little coxswains, dressed like glorified middies and resplendent admirals, holding in their hands, like shy débutantes, the huge bouquets which it is the tradition for the captain of their boat to give them. There are many ways of trying to look unconcerned in a novel and striking dress in the public street, and few manage to do it successfully. Even the old hands find that long ribbons hanging down over the right ear will press themselves on the attention and sometimes tickle, and the eye instinctively wanders downward past

the gaudy shirt to see if the trousers hang right over the buckled shoes, and the hand strays furtively up to feel if the tie is straight. But once at the Brocas and all thought of dress vanishes, for they settle down in their places like experienced oarsmen. It was not till about 1877 that the custom was adopted of sending the Eight as a separate crew in the procession of boats, but it has since been rightly discarded, because the final representative crew which is to row at Henley is not, and never can be, fixed so early in the rowing season. It is curious that an eight-oar should be the permanent type for boat racing, for we never hear of a six-oar or a twelve-oar being built. Probably experiments have been tried in that direction, and the old type of craft proved the best. but I cannot help thinking that a race at Henley between ten-oars or twelve-oars would prove an imposing affair, and it might be interesting to see if they would prove faster than eight-oars.

The head boat of Eton, the *Monarch*, being a ten-oar, always had a solid air of dignity about it. It was the House of Lords among the boats, and contained scholars and men who did not go in for the strenuous career of racing; and sometimes the captain of the school, or the captain of the eleven, was asked

to take an oar in it *honoris causa;* consequently the form displayed was not always the best. But in spite of an occasional attempt to catch crabs, there was always a leisurely stateliness about the old boat, and the fact that the captain of the boats always rowed stroke gave it a prestige above all the others. The boat itself was constantly had in requisition by parties of old Etonians and masters calling themselves "Ancient Mariners," and also by boys, for expeditions up the river when they had a "bill" off "absence." Next in the fleet came the *Victory*, the neatest crew of all, in their light-blue stripes; then the *Prince of Wales*, usually called "Third Upper"—these three being the upper boats. Then the lower boats, led by the *Britannia*, in their order, steered by the coxswains in their dark-blue jackets, looking like pouter pigeons with their bouquets pinned to their chests. You may see now the same uniforms and the same colours worn as were in vogue in the 'seventies, except that I am told each boat does not retain its particular cap and blazer, but the ordinary colours are lumped together according to upper or lower boat "choices," &c. This, no doubt, is for economy's sake, for under the old system, when you obtained a "draught," or move into a higher boat, a new uniform had to be purchased,

but it is to be hoped no further changes will be made. Two important changes were made during that decade: a new boat, called the *Alexandra* after the then Princess of Wales, was added to the list, with colours of black and white; and one which we regretted at the time, viz. the change of the colours of the *Dreadnought* from the red check on a white ground to pink rings on a white ground. The old colours were distinctive, original, and not unbecoming, whereas the new had a way of looking faded and old at once, and for a time we called them in derision the "Neapolitan ice colours." I was wearing an old *Dreadnought* cap one day at Henley Regatta when I was spotted by the sharp eye of the nigger minstrel "Squash." "Make way there, you toff with the chessboard cap," he shouted over a mass of boats; "my move, I think."

In those days the boats rowed up to Surley for their "supper on Boveney Meads," accompanied by a string of spectators, who walked along the bank. Tables were laid in a field opposite Surley Hall, and hedged about with hurdles to keep off the crowd of inferior souls who did not belong to the boating fraternity. Lower boys gaped through the bars to see the lions feed, craving scraps from the great ones like dogs at a rich man's table, and their importunitacy was sometimes rewarded by glasses of champagne.

"Carving with elbow-nudges,
Lobsters we throw behind;
Vinegar nobody grudges,
Lower boys drink it blind"

was a very fine description of our saturnalia, and it was a common thing to ply a small boy with liquor to see how much he could stand. The lower boy, not having a seasoned head, frequently found his feet too few for him on his way back to his tutor's, and got into trouble in consequence.

This crowd of youngsters clamouring for food and drink outside the hurdles was not an edifying spectacle, and the authorities have since wisely changed the venue of the feast to a more private place. As for the old salts, they took care to eat plenty as well as drink, so that if there was a little difficulty in getting into the boat with that neatness and skill which you would expect of a good waterman, the row down stream nearly always brought surrounding objects into their proper places. After all, to stand up in an eight-oar with saluting oars is a great test of sobriety—perhaps better than "British constitution" pronounced at the police station—and the former test we always had awaiting us. It was well if the boat was musical, for a chorus was sure to arise on the journey down stream, or passing through Boveney Lock. Then, as it grew darker and darker, the cox's voice yelling his orders

and "Look ahead, sir!" would become more insistent and louder, till it became merged in the clash of the Windsor bells and the cheers from the bank as you slowly approached Brocas Eyot. A few strokes, and the captain gave the word of command, and you raised your oar in the air, climbed up it like a monkey, and stood while you floated by the row of fireworks on the eyot spitting and sometimes sputtering at you. This habit of the men who let off the fireworks excited the censure of the young lions of the *Eton College Chronicle* in 1876, in language worthy of a leading article of the *Times*: "We cannot conclude without expressing a hope that on the next Fourth of June Mr. Brock and his assistants will refrain from discharging fireworks *at* the boats, as such a proceeding neither adds to the impressiveness of the scene, nor conduces materially to the comfort of the crews."

Then, after passing this ordeal by fire, you sat down, turned the boat rapidly below the bridge, so as not to be drawn into the lasher below "Cobbler's Needle," the spit of land which divides the main river from the lock-cut, and landed at the rafts—perhaps with the aid of "Sambo."

I have thus particularised what used to take place in the 'seventies, because the boats no longer row up to Surley, and the fireworks are displayed below

Windsor Bridge, opposite Fellow's Eyot. I do not wish to cavil at the change, for there were elements of old-fashioned greed in the public suppper at Boveney which smacked too much of the early Georgian period, and the temptation to the lower boy to become intoxicated has been removed; moreover, there is greater space in the new site in which the spectators can view the fireworks.

Once we had landed at the Brocas, and the visitors from London had crossed the bridge, *en route* for the station, and were out of our way, we used to link arms and walk back, six or eight abreast, occupying the middle of the street and singing choruses, and he who attempted to bar our progress was like to have a bad time of it, for was not Barnes Pool perilously near? For to us this linked march of jolly companions was the outward visible sign of the confraternity of wet-bobs, and we displayed ourselves to the world at large once a year as a united band. Then, as the "lock-up" bells began to sound from the various houses, and the population of the street to melt away, we separated, each to his own house, to sleep that excellent sleep which nature gives to those who have done themselves well. There may have been elements of orgy still hanging about our festival which the pious and sad-eyed critic may deplore, but life would

indeed be dull without a tincture of the carnival spirit, the love of good cheer and gay dress, and it will be a bad day for Eton if she ever ceases to celebrate the birthday of George the Third in the old accustomed way.

CHAPTER IX

THE RIVER

"Swing, swing together!"

THERE is a poetry and a beauty about water, it matters not what shape it assumes, whether it falls on the earth in the silent white canopy of snow, or freezes in a grey level of ice, or thunders against a rocky coast, but perhaps it appeals most to our restful and reflective side when it sweeps in the form of a river through the midst of a picturesque old town. It bears the historic associations of an ancient highway which men have used for countless generations, and its slow, silent, and perpetual motion is a fit emblem of eternity. "Time, like an ever-rolling stream, Bears all its sons away." You cannot sit on the banks of a river and watch the little eddies chasing each other with the soft haste of lovers without being soothed in spirit and your mind being relieved of its burden of worry. It was in a river that the ancients established the seat of forgetfulness, and it was to the fountains of Helicon that they ascribed their noblest poetry.

Eton is unique in its fortunate possession of a navigable river, and the priceless value of this asset is sometimes not sufficiently borne in mind. People do not realise how much the river enters into the *genius loci*, how much the hard training, the endurance, the rivalry, the unity of effort, the very panoply of costume, go to influence the imagination and form the character of the future man. The scenery has something to do with it. The daily picture of Windsor's massive castle presiding in royal splendour over the little town which clings about its skirts, and protecting it as a hen does its young, and England's noblest river flowing in stately calm at its foot, though perhaps we mark it not at the time, insensibly raises our æsthetic perception, and gives that debonair taste and confidence which, when carried to an excess, our critics call conceit, but without some measure of which we should have nothing whereupon to base our enthusiasm. We are justly proud of our background and all that it means to us in after life, and perhaps the subtle influence of scenery upon character, especially in youth, is not sufficiently appreciated.

I take it there are more sterling qualities necessary to the making of a good oarsman than for the attainment of proficiency in any other sport. The neatness of wrist to produce a clean feather, the sense of

rhythm to follow the stroke, the acute feeling of balance to keep the boat on an even keel, which is the essence of good watermanship, the subtle variation of power essential in steering round corners, the judgment and pluck whereby a man puts forth his best strength and yet reserves a pound or so extra for the final spurt, the gallant effort in responding to stroke's call in quickening the stroke, the glorious sense of brotherhood which animates a crew in their united struggle for a common end, the unselfishness of the result, and, above all, the long, hard weeks of hopeful training, good for the body and good for the soul. Unconsciously I have dropped into a catalogue, almost Whitmanesque, though not so poetical, of the virtues of rowing; let it suffice to say that there are some among them not attributable to other sports. In them an element of selfishness and consequent conceit may, I do not say always does, creep in, following on the sole efforts of one individual—for instance, in a big score at cricket—and this I do not find in rowing, save in a sculling-race. The success of a team may be due to one or two, whereas in rowing there must be a general high level of excellence. My "dry-bobbing" friends will pardon this comparison as born of the enthusiasm of the writer, and not of a desire to raise the dust of controversy.

But, apart from rowing, the proximity of the river offers to all the valuable inducement to learn to swim, and it is seldom that men leave school in the state of the "*non nant.*" Out of water life came in the origin of things, and it is well that man should be invigorated by the bosom of his mother-element instead of being stifled in a deadly embrace. How many an Etonian has saved his life, and that of others, from having had the advantage of that few weeks' teaching at Cuckoo Weir? Talbot and Bob were the two watermen who presided over the school of swimming, the one on this, the other on the far side of the stream. Talbot's judgment of your pluck was unerring; well did he recognise the psychological moment when, gasping and struggling in the belt in which he held you, he should relax the support and allow you to swim by yourself. Sometimes he ducked you deliberately to show you it was not so bad as you expected. The worst pupil, who excited his contempt the most, was he who swam with one foot on the ground. But he had encouragement for the despondent, for when a big boy took a fine running header from the bank, diving and swimming like a fish, he would point him out and say with pride, "I taught him, sir: he was just like you four years agone"; and you proceeded to try again with fresh courage.

Then one fine day he set you to swim across the deep part to the steps opposite, and you went with the fear of death upon you, and a consciousness that you were floating over a vast pit, and you arrived breathless and triumphant on the other side. Then, after much practice, the fateful day arrived when you went in for "passing." You took your place in a punt with several others, shivering with nervousness, and hoping that when your name was called out you would take a decent header and not a "gutter," as it was called, while Warre, or Walter Durnford, or some other master, took his seat on the "Acropolis," surrounded by a crowd of spectators. Suddenly your name was called, and you stood up, bare and trembling like a soul at the Judgment Day, and plunged in, and struggled round the ryepeck, which seemed to be miles and miles away. At last you were told that you had passed, and you put on your clothes with a warm feeling of comfort inside; and then there was a race for the boat, where your friends were waiting to row you a wild race to the Brocas, in which they invariably tried to upset the boat to give you a little confidence, and sometimes they succeeded.

The big boys in fifth form bathed at "Athens," and many were the dives taken off the "Acropolis" there. In those days we bathed nude as sculptors'

models, and it is much to be regretted that, owing to prudish complaints, the authorities have ordered the wearing of bathing costumes. In reality there was no need of it, for if a strange boat approached, a cry of "Cave!" went round, and we always either plunged into the water or arrayed ourselves suitably and picturesquely with towels. But "Tommy Atkins," whose bathing-place was between Upper and Lower Hope, was certainly not always so careful, and I cannot help thinking we suffered on account of his extravagances. I remember a debate being solemnly discussed in "Pop" on the question of whether we should adopt bathing-drawers, and the proposition was laughed out of court by the waggish suggestion that house colours might be worn and that motley was the only wear.

Then came the probation of a year or so, during which there were many voyages to Surley in a vessel called a "cedar," now happily obsolete. It was a strange craft, utterly unfit for the practice of rowing, consisting of a wide, smooth shell of stout cedar wood, with rowlocks, being part of the shell itself, pointing outwards at a wide angle. It was crank, it was heavy in the water, and easily upset, nevertheless it was the boat in which Lower Boy Pulling was raced. Surley Hall was a riverside inn where drinks were dispensed

to the thirsty oarsman, usually followed by a game of Aunt Sally with the bottles, to the great annoyance of mine host. He was blessed with the bowels of compassion, however, for one day I happened to cut my finger badly with a broken bottle and he tied it up with a wad of fresh tobacco over the wound, which was most efficacious.

The four races open to those not in the boats were Lower Boy and Junior Pulling and Sculling, and from the form displayed in those races the captains of the various boats were able to fill up the vacancies in the crews. These were tests quite sufficient to foreshadow the future capacity of the boy. Since the beginning of the 'seventies, however, many new races have been instituted, with the object, I am told, of obtaining a still better selection, and I have yet to learn of any of the old races being abolished. There are Novice Eights, started in 1876, Junior House Fours and Junior Eights, Novice Sculling and Novice Pulling. The result is that a young oar has to race more nowadays than he did in former times. And here I must sound a note of warning, at the risk of being severely taken to task by a younger generation. This increase of racing for young and growing boys is utterly bad, though it may help the seniors in weeding out the weak oars. If it is said that it forms early habits

of rowing hard, then, I ask, when did Eton rowing lack vigour? The spectacle I witnessed the other day of these mites in a junior sculling-race, overboated in their whiffs, and toiling from the Brocas to Sandbank and back, encouraged by the shouts of august personages in the Eight, made me question seriously whether this early racing may not be overdone, and whether these struggling imps might not be better employed in improving their form quietly at a "paddle," and whether they would not be fitter to stand the strenuous rowing of after years. It is, of course, difficult to prove the point with certainty, for there are so many factors to consider, but we seem to hear more of rowing strain than we used to. All the members but one of the crew of 1878 are now happily alive and still healthy men, and I am tempted to wonder whether the more constantly trained racer of the twentieth century will last on the average so well.

One day I was walking casually along the street, when Courtenay Warner, whom I regarded as a towering swell, marched up to me and said curtly: "Will you take an oar in the *Thetis?*" It would be interesting to speculate upon what would happen if a fellow refused (it would be from sheer nervousness, of course)—whether it would remain there, or whether

another approach would be made by letter. I only know I murmured something which was taken as an assent, that I must have blushed exceedingly, and that I marched off feeling that every eye in the street was fixed on my proud self, and that I rounded up at Sanders & Brown's, where I ordered my kit. I was in the boats, on the bottom rung of the rowing ladder, promoted from Goodman's to Searle's raft. The three greatest events in a boating career causing most pride are taking an oar in the boats, being "hoisted," and getting your "flannels." The second occurred to me when my tutor's won House Fours in a record time with only one upper-boat "choice" and three lower-boat "choices" against a house crew manned by the captain of the boats and three upper-boat "choices"; consequently our triumph was unexpected. The process was as follows: On our arrival at Barnes Pool Bridge from the Brocas we were arrested by a crowd, and each of us in turn was seized by four stout fellows, two at the shoulders and two clutching the ends of our trousers, and run up and down the wall to the entrance of Weston's Yard and back amid the cheers of the school. It was a most uncomfortable proceeding, and, as I was wearing a very ancient pair of grey flannel "bags," I was in terror lest they should give way and split in the middle;

but, thanks to Manley's good material, they survived the strain. My tutor was so pleased at our victory that he gave us a "sock" supper, and filled the House Four Cup with champagne.

One of the most enjoyable ways of spending an afternoon, if you were not in training for a race, was getting a "bill" off absence. A crew of an eight-oar sent in their names to the "Head," who let us off six o'clock "absence" on the understanding that we always rowed round the red post which stands above some rushes under the Cliveden Woods, some way above Boulter's Lock at Maidenhead. That post is still there, I believe, though when I last saw it some years ago it was getting worn very thin by the current at its base. Like Hamlet's question to the grave-digger, one feels inclined to ask how long a post will stand in the water and resist corruption. What its original function was, perhaps some local historian might tell us, but its only use seemed to be to mark the upper end of our island of rushes. How good those long and leisurely rows were with seven chosen companions, armed with the privilege of exploring a new country, and swinging rhythmically past the rich verdure of the woods of Cliveden, and dropping down to a well-earned feast at Skindle's, naturally called "Swindle's" as we considered the prices ruinous, or

perhaps Monkey Island, and finally a cool plunge into Boveney Weir. Even now, when we pause in our gig or punt and try to drink in the sounds of the river, the soft flop of the water-rat, and the queer snort of the swan as he breasts the stream in defence of his young, and we try to make out the bells of Windsor pealing above the soothing swish of the distant weir, and suddenly from miles away carried to us by the gentle wind comes the well-known rhythm of "Pewff truck, pewff truck," which can only belong to an eight-oar, then we, "who are slow on the feather and seem to the boys old fools," smile, and our eyes glisten at the recollection of those jolly days when we of the *Victory*, *Britannia*, or *Dreadnought* got a "bill" off absence.

Occasionally on our excursions we met a slow and lumbering barge being towed by a horse along the bank, our coxswain always going outside the barge to avoid the towrope, and as we slid by we invariably raised the time-honoured cry, "Who ate puppy-dog pie under Marlow Bridge?" repeating it louder and louder as we increased our distance. This gibe never failed to produce the most fearful language from the bargees. My father has told me that this mode of accosting a bargee was always used in his time and was considered traditional, so that the true origin

must be lost in the mists of time, and a fit subject for the investigation of the folklorist. A current explanation is that some bargees once stole a pie, among other things, from a house-boat, whereupon the occupants waggishly laid a trap by cooking some puppies in a pie which they left for the bargees, who took it and ate it greedily, and that their anger at being taken in has descended to the third and fourth generation. But whatever the origin, a sure way to this day of finding out what a bargee can do in the art of swearing is to shout at him, "Who ate puppy-dog pie under Marlow Bridge?" I have heard that the use of this invocation has spread from Dan even unto Beersheba, and that Thornycroft's men at Chiswick employ it at the present time.

As touching bargees Dr. H. P. Cholmeley writes: "Do you remember a pitched battle which we had with some bargees on the river between Athens and Lower Hope? Some race was on, and a string of barges came down right into the middle of it. They would not go away, and we boarded the barges and cut the towrope. Somebody was nearly drowned by falling off a barge in the hug of a bargee, but nothing serious happened, except that one barge stuck on the bank and could not be got off for a day or so. Our leader, I recollect perfectly, was

Keppel; I dare say his recollection is more vivid than mine."

I well remember the purple language of a buxom virago who did much execution with a broom-handle in righteous defence of her hearth and home, that we pelted her with a dead crow, and deluged the occupants of the barge by splashing them with our oars. Somehow we never could impress the bargees with the sacredness of an Eton boat-race, and I suppose that not even our animated protest has taught this stockish race of navigators to respect our sport, and that they will continue to blunder like mastodons into the midst of Junior Sculling and equally important races. They are like the invasion of commercialism into the dainty realms of art—pitiless, ugly, and irresistible—and yet I suppose they are necessary. On a canal they are well, and in their place, fitting in appropriately to the sluggish calm of stagnant water and a quiet and solitary landscape, but on a river, with its active movement and strenuous life, they seem strangely out of keeping. Of all strange craft I suppose we hated barges and steam-launches the most. Many of the latter used to snort by our boats, raising a miniature sea which damaged the banks and upset our equilibrium, while the fat plutocrats sat on deck puffing their huge cigars regardless of the storm they had

raised. Their womenkind also sometimes savoured too much of the third row of the ballet to suit our taste. In short, we regarded them from much the same point of view that the horseman used to regard the motorist. He propelled himself by means of a stinking machine and took no exercise, *ergo*——

After I had left Eton on one occasion I was in an outrigger passing through Boveney Lock when a great Leviathan surged in, and, in spite of my warning shouts, deliberately ran me down and sank me. As I scrambled out the vulgar owner and his friends roared with laughter, and one of them let fly a champagne cork at me when I emerged on the bank. With as much dignity as a drowned rat can assume I asked him what he was going to do by way of reparation, and was greeted with more shouts of ribald laughter. Then I kindly, but firmly, told him what I thought of him in the noble language of an oarsman somewhat put out, and demanded his name and address. For answer, I was told to go to a very warm place. I strung a few names together, hastily conceived, which I thought would suit the occasion, by way of reply, and joined the lock-keeper, who was a friend of mine, to help him put my boat straight. He gave me a huge wink. "I shan't let 'un through till you tells me," he said, and opened the sluices to let the

water out. This done, he sat down and lit his pipe. "Why don't you open the gate?" shouted Crœsus. "There ain't no 'urry," replied the lock-keeper without moving. "Hurry up, my man, we're catching a train at Staines." "I dare say, that ain't got no interest to me." "D—d impertinence. Do you know I shall report you if you don't open the gate at once, and let us out?" "You may report as much as you like, but you don't go out of this lock till you give this 'ere gen'leman your name and address." "I'll be d—d if I do," said Crœsus. "Then you'll stop 'ere all night." Then there was a whispered consultation among Crœsus and his friends. "Look here," he said in a wheedling tone, "I'll give you a sovereign if you let us through." "After you've satisfied this gentleman." "A couple?" The lock-keeper put his foot down angrily. "If you think you are going to open this lock with your blarsted quids you're ruddy well mistaken," said he. The position was now reversed. Instead of towering over me in his great launch, Crœsus was at the bottom of the lock, while I stood above him on the bank very cool, as a wet man should be, and inexorable. "I think, sir, you had better give me your name and address," I said as I scribbled my own on the back of a lock ticket. We exchanged cards. "Will you

apologise ? " said I. " No, I won't," said he. " Very well," I retorted, " unless you send an apology to that address within three days I'll complain to the Thames Conservancy, and, what is more, I swear I'll prosecute you for this ; unless you apologise I'll summons you, and it's a pity someone doesn't teach you how to behave like a gentleman." Having delivered myself of this transpontine piece of rhetoric, I turned on my heel with the air of a tragic actor, and stalked away. There was dead silence on the launch now, as with the aid of the lock-keeper, whose palm I crossed with my last coin, a trifle compared with the bribe of Crœsus, I got into the outrigger and sculled fiercely down to Windsor. I hadn't the slightest idea whether I could have prosecuted, or what my remedy was, but the threat sounded mighty fine, and moreover it succeeded, for I got a letter of apology from Crœsus written with an ill grace. I doubt whether he ever would have learnt good manners, and I am thankful that there are few owners of launches as bad as he.

" Our business in life," says Stevenson, " is not to succeed, but to continue to fail in good spirits," and certainly the best Eight Eton sent to Henley during the 'seventies failed most honourably. It was a fine crew that of 1874, and one of which we were justly proud. John Croft (afterwards Sir John) was stroke ;

T. C. Edwards-Moss, 7; A. J. Mulholland, 6; E. Vincent (afterwards Sir Edgar), 5; S. A. Bennett, 4; W. A. Ellison, 3; A. B. Gordon, 2; E. W. Hussey, bow; and H. Walton, cox. They were sporting enough to enter both for the Grand Challenge and for the Ladies' Plate, and on the first day they had the varied fortune of beating First Trinity in the trial heat for the Grand Challenge in the morning, and of being beaten by the very same crew in the afternoon in the trial heat for the Ladies' Plate, "when," says the *Eton College Chronicle*, "the wind having shifted, the stations were unequal." On the second day, in the final for the Grand, they drew the Bucks station, with the usual bad luck which seemed to dog Eton at Henley, Thames the centre, and London the Berks station. Thames fell out of the running during the race, leaving Eton and London to contest the victory. There was a heavy wind off the Bucks shore during the tremendous tussle which ensued, then the inside turn gave London the advantage at the corner and they drew away; but the Eton spurt, led by Croft in the last 200 yards, bringing us to within half a length of victory, was a memorable performance, associating the school with one of the finest struggles ever witnessed at Henley.

But the ill-luck of Eton in drawing for stations became almost proverbial, seeing that in 1871, and

for five years running after 1874, they had the outside station; consequently in the years 1875, 1876, and 1877 they were thrown out on the first day, and in 1878, in the final for the Ladies' Plate against Jesus, Cambridge, it was truly heart-breaking to row level to the corner against a crew containing such men as Prest, Gurdon, Hockin, Armitage, Fairbairn, and Jones, &c., and then to see them gradually draw away in the tail of one's eye, well knowing the corner was favouring them. We were beaten by the length and a half which was considered to be the value of the inside turn, all other things being equal, but yet we failed—"in good spirits." We received the consolations of the *Eton College Chronicle*, which said: "Had they got the inside station they would in all probability have won, for the corner is about worth the amount by which Eton suffered defeat." Again in 1879 did Eton draw the outside station on the second day, and was beaten by Lady Margaret by one length! But why catalogue these buffets of fortune, which are something noisome to think of after all these years? Yet 'tis a melancholy thing to think of what we might have done. It is like dreaming of the vast fortunes we could have made had we lived in the days of Captain Singleton. For nowadays the course is so marked out that there is no advantage in any particular

station apart from weather conditions; and in the case of a wind off the Bucks shore those who draw the Bucks station have the advantage of the protection of the bushes, and we may all rejoice that there is no longer the glaring inequality of the old course.

I have specially mentioned the crew of 1874, not only because it was the best crew turned out by Eton during the 'seventies, but also because of the individual oars it contained. T. C. Edwards Moss, "Cotty" Moss as he was called afterwards, the future Oxford seven, and winner of the Diamonds, was perhaps the best all-round oar Eton ever turned out. Gifted with a splendid figure, he rowed and sculled with that apparent ease which comes of great strength combined with grace. You would scarcely recognise an extra effort by observing his body, but at the end of his blade it would be obvious. He was the hero of one of the finest struggles for the Diamond Sculls ever fought at Henley. It is best described in a letter written at the time to his parents by R. G. Seton: "I was about a quarter of a mile from the finish, and the American (G. W. Lee of New Jersey) was leading by half a length, and suddenly Moss threw up, and for about a few seconds rested and did not pull; there was a howl from the bank for him to go on, and so he put on a most terrific spurt, and caught up

the American just within ten yards of the end, winning by about half a foot!" The *Chronicle* says that Lee was so exhausted that he stopped before reaching the post. A. J. Mulholland, too, was a notable oar for strength and precision. J. R. Croft, the eldest of a family of distinguished oarsmen, was one of the best strokes we ever sent to Henley, and W. A. Ellison a pattern of neatness and strength. To see the last-named and his brother, O. J. Ellison, rowing in a pair-oar, never touching the water with their feathers between the strokes, was to witness an exhibition of perfection of watermanship and Eton form. Style in rowing comes to a man much in the same way as the aptitude for letters, not without the sweat of the brow and much practice, but with a grace swiftly generated in a favoured few to the envy of their compeers. It is as subtle and indefinable as beauty itself, yet it is patent to every eye when infused into a crew, and it is the quality which has enabled striplings to do creditable battle with mature men for generations.

The crew which in later years has reminded me most of the crew of 1874 was that of 1911, which carried off the Ladies' Plate, though it is not easy to compare one with another. One very great change has taken place since the 'seventies, and that is the remarkable

increase in the weight of the crews sent to Henley. The heaviest oar in 1874 was 11 st. 12 lbs. and the lightest 9 st. 9 lbs., whereas, during the last decade or so, 12 and 13 st. men were quite common, and anyone under 10 st. would have to be exceptionally good to obtain a seat in the boat. To assign correctly the causes of this would be an interesting subject for scientific inquiry, which is beyond the scope of the present writer. It may be that the spread of athletics and the taste for open-air pursuits among modern women of the upper classes has tended to produce sons of a bigger build than in former years, and it may be that the modern father is a healthier and more out-of-door person; or perhaps the extra selection made possible by the new races, the addition of which I have deplored above, has enabled the coaches to train more carefully those boys of a heavier build with a view to their being useful at Henley; or again it may be purely a question of feeding, though indeed we were not conscious of being underfed in my time; but the fact remains that the average weight of Eton crews is about a stone heavier than it used to be, some of them even approaching the weight of an ordinary University crew. The result has been a perceptible alteration in the Eton style of rowing, and I will venture to say it

has improved, at the risk of being taken to task by my contemporaries.

In the 'seventies we were beginning an epoch of experiment and transition. It was, I believe, at the suggestion of Mr. Scott Russell that certain theories dealing with early displacement of water were carried into effect; for instance, the boat of 1878 was widest between Nos. 3 and 4, and tapered to a narrow width at the stern, which necessitated the crew sitting in the absolute centre of the boat, each taking the time from the man immediately in front. Such a build had many points about it, although the boat was apt to roll badly if the crew were not together, in spite of its very square section at its widest part. Other experiments were made in 1879 and 1880 with the shape of the oars, one set having a queer bulge in the middle of the blade; but, speaking generally, I should say that there has been a reversion to type with regard to the shape of boat and oars. But the average increase in the weight of the crews brought about a natural alteration of style. The light crews of the 'seventies were expected at a pinch to row forty-six and even forty-eight strokes a minute, and you cannot expect a 12 or 13 stone man to utilise his weight in so short a time; consequently the slide had to be lengthened, the stroke has become slower and

longer, and Eton has almost adopted the University style. This is a distinct advantage to Etonians when they go to the University, as they no longer have to get rid of the Eton "bucket," as it was called.

But apart from technicalities, whether we scull in an outrigger, row in an eight, or toil in a tub, whether we be old or young, the spell of the river never loses its charm; it penetrates all over the world, to India and the Colonies and "where the flying fishes play"; it excites fat and middle-aged men to organise regattas in sweltering ports to the wonderment of the Oriental; and wherever an Etonian meets his brother, in the jungle, forest, or parched plain, you will be sure to hear the old familiar strain rising into the still-night air, proclaiming that they "still swing together, and swear by the best of schools."

CHAPTER X

CRICKET

"In the early days of Lord Hawke's captaincy he once said to Emmott, 'Tom, do you know how many wides you have bowled this year? Forty-five.'"—SIR HOME GORDON.

I SHALL be indeed lucky if I do not bowl a great many more than forty-five wides in this chapter, not to mention no-balls. I remember seeing a noble lord, who was most distinguished in the scientific world, but unacquainted with the game, play in a village cricket match; he played with the wrong side of his bat, but no one dared tell him of his error, and it was amazing to see how many chances he gave in the slips and how long he kept his wickets standing. I think I see my dry-bobbing friends waiting to catch me out in the slips, and I promise them many chances. The late Dr. E. M. Grace, when playing point for Gloucestershire, used frequently to creep in closer and closer to the batsman, till through sheer nervousness a catch was given which he never missed. I trust the many Graces in the field will allow me a few chances before I am caught.

"Sixpenny," or the Timbralls, short for Timber-

halls, I believe, was the great Campus Martius of the young cricketer in the 'seventies. To a timid boating man it always seemed a most dangerous place, necessitating the cultivation of a quick eye for self-preservation, but as a matter of fact few serious accidents took place there. Surrounded almost on all sides by practice nets in full use, and sometimes with a game going on in the centre, the air seemed thick with flying balls coming from every direction, and you required a complex eye like a dragon-fly to be quite safe. Sometimes you would be fielding in the centre, and you received a ball plumb in the small of the back, followed by a distant and cheery "Thank you, cut over," whereat, if not entirely disabled, you returned it a pace that indicated your anger. Now that the immensity of Agar's Plough is added to the available space for play, no such danger need exist. "In 1871," says Mr. Lyttelton, "the number of games of cricket played at once never exceeded four: one in Sixpenny, two in Upper Sixpenny, and one in Middle Club: then about 1873 one was added over the Slough Road beyond Sixpenny, a piece of land called 'Jordan' because it was over the water called Chalvey Ditch. It was the custom in these games for a side to order a gallon of beer whenever three wickets in one over were bowled. One day it was discovered that this

was agreeable, and gallons were ordered every half-holiday for many weeks: nobody interfered. The beer, paltry stuff, came from Tap. But soon after this the management at Tap was changed, and little or no care was taken to collect the debts. The result was, no one ever paid for these gallons."

The "Sixpenny" eleven cap was the only "colours" available to a lower boy, and when he exchanged the blue-and-black ringed "scug" cap for the broad majenta and white rings he became a marked man, whose future you could bet on. When Martin Hawke at my tutor's appeared one day all glorious in his "Sixpenny" cap, we were not far wrong in prophesying that he would be heard of again. Moreover he was notable for a personal distinction which, I believe, is quite unique. He is the only lower boy that I ever heard of who could grow quite respectable side-whiskers and moustache, though we had legends, fortified by photographs, of groups of "Pop," &c., in which A. F. Kinnaird and W. J. Courthope appeared in full beards; and certainly, when he played in the eleven, Hawke looked older than many an Eton master. For a boy to grow an incipient moustache in his last year or so was not uncommon, but a beard and side-whiskers were very rare. The next aspiration of the

possessor of a "Sixpenny" cap was to exchange it for the light blue and black of "Twenty-two" colours, the stepping-stone to the eleven. The matches in Upper Club then became of absorbing interest, and sometimes the final team was not settled till a few days before the Eton and Harrow match.

For many, many years the peg upon which Eton cricket hung was Mr. R. A. H. Mitchell, *alias* "Mike." It was to his training and vast experience and judgment that Eton owed so many of her victories and hard-fought and plucky defeats, and it was to the old gladiator, the champion of former days, that successive captains looked for advice and assistance. Constantly at some critical point in a match you would see a light-blue cap and grey head in a close and short conference before some vital change in tactics took place, and sometimes that change decided the issue in our favour. He did not impress us in school as being a profound scholar, but he managed to get a fair amount of work done for him, for there was an insistence about those grey eyes of his, and that even tone of voice, which made you feel that you had to stand up to the bowling, and yet it was not very fast or very tricky. I don't suppose he ever had an enemy among the boys, for the simple reason that in his relations with them he showed that he understood the word

"cricket" in its larger sense, and always played the game. To imagine "Mike" taking a mean advantage of a boy would be to conceive water running uphill. I gladly append the following appreciative remarks by the present Headmaster, as incidentally they deal with the remarkable change about this period which began to take place in the relations between the masters and boys as regards athletics.

"About 1865 R. A. H. Mitchell was appointed a master in order to revive the cricket, which had been apparently at a lower ebb than that of Harrow for some years past. He, and George R. Dupuis, the son of the very aged Vice-Provost, took in hand seriously the cricket of Upper Club, but for many years did nothing to help the rest of the school. Their assiduity was astonishing. Dupuis used to rise at 4.30 every Thursday morning during the summer term before Lord's in order to get through his verses. He worked till 8.30, and then was ready to umpire in Upper Club the whole "after 12" and "after 4," standing in a hot sun in a long black coat and tall hat, not missing a ball. Mitchell was always there with him, but their practice was never to go near the place unless the captain of the eleven formally asked them, a great nuisance for the latter. Not long after 1875, they ceased to appear in tall hats; but about 1872, if ever Dupuis came to

play fives he was always clothed outwardly in a black overcoat and tall hat.

"There was, however, no sort of recognition of play of any sort as an excuse for work. The representatives of the school were expected to show up all their work in the same week as the Harrow match, and did so, though their thoughts were *wholly* engrossed with the coming struggle.

"After 1869 masters were always asked to umpire in the important football house matches, a very difficult and delicate piece of work. This was owing to an unfair decision, or one so held to be, in a match between Evans's and Warre's in that year. But it was not till 1880, or thereabouts, that it was common to see masters associating with boys in games on terms of the utmost cordiality and almost of equality, and once in 1885 three of them were returning from a Wednesday 'after 12' field game and met Warre, the Headmaster, in the street, who joked with them and passed on. They marvelled to think what Balston would have said to them in 1867, a man so decorous as never to appear out of his house without cap and gown.

"When Warre first became Head he had a struggle about his costume when he wished to row down to see the eight practise. The sportsman overcame the don, and he put on a straw hat and flannels.

"All this indicated a strange revolution. Only twenty years before a boy seen going to any playground in flannels was liable to be punished, and about 1860 all the approaches to the playing fields were out of bounds, and the absurd practice of formally shirking a master continued, I believe, till 1867. It certainly did not exist after 1868."

The Eton and Harrow match at Lord's always has been, and I hope always will be, the great annual festival for dry-bobs. "Long leave" was specially reserved for that date, because a boy could remain in town with his people from Friday till the following Monday. To do himself justice, the fourth-form "scug" changed his whole being. His hat shone like a starling's back, a spotless collar encircled his throat, from which depended a light-blue tie with its ends disappearing beneath a snowy white waistcoat, and he flourished in his hand an umbrella decked with tassels of light blue.

A friend of mine—whose character is enshrined in a somewhat agglomerated form in that clever skit, "A Day of My Life at Eton," written by G. Nugent Bankes while still a boy there—once asked what he ought to wear for the festive occasion. He was a new boy, and from the country, and we told him all

lower boys were obliged to wear white tall hats, and that the light-blue umbrella tassels were called "fligs." Having witnessed the Fourth of June he was prepared for anything, so he solemnly marched off to New and Lingwood's and ordered a white hat and a "flig," to the embarrassment of Miss Lingwood behind the counter, and to the great amusement of other boys in the shop. Why he was not called "flig" for the rest of his natural existence I cannot tell, but the curious fact remains that he was called something else; but, as Kipling says, that is another story.

In the 'seventies Lord's presented a very different appearance from what it does now. There were no luncheon tents and more carriages to obstruct the view, and on the south side stood the tennis court with its huge clock, under which was the tryst of many a friend. When I first saw it, that clock was reminiscent of a mighty hit of F. M. Buckland, who smote a ball through its face when playing for Eton the year before, and often was its dial anxiously watched by thousands of spectators when time became the essence of the match. Unless you made an appointment to meet under the clock, you never found your friends in that seething mass of well-dressed people strolling ceaselessly round the outside of the carriages. A well-known cricketer, but somewhat abrupt in his

manner, once casually met a friend whom he had not seen for years. "How are you, my dear fellow," said he, "and how's the dear wife?" The friend's face relaxed his smile of greeting a little: "I have lost her," he said. "No wonder, in this crowd," was the answer. "I mean to say she's dead." "Good God!" said the cricketer, and buried himself in the crowd.

The memory of a wet-bob concerning cricket witnessed nearly forty years ago is necessarily somewhat hazy, and the chronicle of facts compiled from contemporary documents would be dull reading indeed, but one or two events have so stuck in the mind that I will try to convey the impression they made at the time. One was in 1874. Harrow had won the toss, and sent in A. J. Webbe and Walker, who knocked up 50 runs before any wicket fell. At last Walker was disposed of, but Webbe was well set, and continued to play with ease and boldness, hitting our bowling about as he pleased. Things were looking serious for Eton, and our hearts were beginning to sink each time the ball was sent to the boundary. He had made 77 runs when at last a ball, well on the leg side, tempted him to step out, and he hit it with all his might to long-leg, where Edward Lyttelton was lying in wait. It was just out of reach,

but Lyttelton managed to make a jump, and caught it flying at full speed! It was the best and the most important catch I ever witnessed in the cricket field, for, although it took place early in the first innings, the loss of A. J. Webbe had such a demoralising effect upon the batsmen who followed, that wicket after wicket fell in rapid succession, and Harrow only managed to score about 15 runs more. There is a tide in the affairs of men in cricket as well as in more serious matters, and, once a dramatic touch is given to some turn of the game, things seems to follow with the inevitable tread of fate. As a matter of fact Eton owed her victory by three wickets to that one lucky and brilliant catch. I am glad, however, to add Mr. Lyttelton's own account of this match in greater detail:

"In the course of the summer 'Mike' went to Harrow to spy out the land, and came back with the verdict that the team was not strong at all, except that in A. J. Webbe they had the best batsman since C. Buller. This was not very tranquillising, as we knew of some fairly formidable people in between, especially in the 1866 eleven, and E. P. Baily in 1870, and never were misgivings more amply justified. Webbe got 77 and 80 in the one match, a far finer performance really than Bird's famous double century

in 1907 or 1908, because Lord's was still in 1874 a ground on which balls shot dead sometimes. But after 1875 this phenomenon ceased, to the great detriment of the game.

"However, as captain in 1874, I determined to take a sporting line, and not rely on 'Mike' for the changing of the bowling unless we got into a terrible knot. This was what occurred. Webbe hit behind the wicket with extraordinary precision, the cuts being very hard and low, and the leg hits ditto all along the ground. It was fine fun fielding long-leg to him. When he had got 77 in the first innings I resolved that the time was ripe for a message to 'Mike.' This was achieved by E. P. Ralli, our long-stop, pretending that his lace was broken and running into the pavilion. He emerged with a complicated message, the first clause in which was that one Wakefield was to go on bowling at the pavilion end. "Tommy" Wakefield was a singular person in many ways, with an indescribably funny face and a talent for comic songs. In 1875 he became one of the finest boy bowlers I ever saw. However, he began with a half volley to leg to Webbe, who slashed out at it, but he hit for the first time under the ball, which rose fairly high in my direction, but likely to drop short out of reach as I was at the ropes down the hill. The hill

then sloped more than it does now, and as soon as I started running, it seemed quite impossible to get there. But this was owing to a misjudgment, because, if a catch is coming downhill, it drops further from the hitter than if it were on the flat, and at that time I did not know this in practice, and ran hard without any nervousness, thinking the thing was out of the question. At the very last moment I shot my hands out, and to my amazement the ball stuck.

"Webbe had his revenge by catching me out in the second innings with the most astounding catch I have ever seen, and again in 1875, when we faced each other for the rival Universities, but the 1874 catch was the more brilliant."

1876 was a memorable and triumphant year, in which Harrow were defeated by an innings and 24 runs. Our captain, W. F. Forbes, went in first, and managed to capture the bowling quite early in the proceedings, hitting every loose ball freely to the boundary. Bowler after bowler was tried to no effect, till he was caught out after having made 113 runs. In compiling the unusually large score of 308 he was assisted by the gigantic L. Bury, the man of muscle, who opened his shoulders well and contributed 72 by slogging almost every ball to the boundary.

It may not have been scientific cricket of the best kind, but no one could say it was dull, while a roar went up from Etonians old and young at every stroke. H. C. Goodhart's respectable score of 51 paled before the brilliancy of the other two, and, while the swiping was going forward, one felt that the soulless repetition of "Cards of the match, gentlemen," was strangely out of place in such an excitement. The boy who could go on selling cards impassively till he was nearly cut over by the ball must have the spirit of a sheep, and a flat, stale, and unprofitable future before him.

Of Walter Forbes, C. M. Smith writes that he was one of the most brilliant schoolboy cricketers. "Who can forget those lovely throws in from square-leg over the trees? He was a tower of strength in the eleven, and a most encouraging and inspiriting captain. 'Never mind the catch,' he said to a young bowler in his first school match, who had missed a gaper at short-leg in the first over. 'Bowl them out!'"

As to Mitchell's methods of giving advice during a match, he says: "When a change of bowling or in the field was necessary at Lord's, the boy sitting next old 'Mike' by the ropes would hold up his umbrella handle to his face, and the deep field nearest would fall back to the ropes and overhear 'Mike's' suggestions to the boy next him. These suggestions would

be conveyed to the captain at the end of the over, and would, as a general rule, be acted on by him. On one occasion when 'Mike' was thus directing affairs a messenger arrived at the wicket with a glass of water and a message from Lord Harris to take off C. T. Studd, who had been bowling a long time, and put on someone else. Under the circumstances this advice was declined, and fortunately Studd got a wicket in his next over."

I have spoken elsewhere of the self-consciousness of gait, especially of the march of the great ones up Chapel, but there is one walk in which there is no individuality, viz. the walk from the pavilion to the wicket. There all swagger ceases, the easy swing of the arms is cramped by the bat tucked under one arm, the fingers fumble over the batting-gloves, and the legs are stiffened by the pads. The poor wretch is thinking all the time: "Now is my only chance of distinguishing myself, for all London and the cricketing world is looking on; thousands of eyes in that wide circle are centred on ME. I hope I shan't make a duck!" And this is probably why all batsmen walk to the wicket in the same doubting, modest way. On one occasion it is related that a batsman was so overcome by nervousness on reaching the wicket that he could not see at all till Dutch courage was brought

to him from the pavilion in a glass, and indeed I should imagine that there was no moment in life equal to it in intensity. The feelings of the man who is bowled by the first ball, as he hurries back to hide himself in the pavilion, are beyond thought; there are some things which are fortunately swamped in the Lethe of kindly forgetfulness.

This nervousness sometimes attacks the bowler; witness the following incident related by C. M. Smith:

"There were two or three unusual incidents in the match with Harrow in 1878. The late Cyril Cattley opened the match with three wides to leg. The fourth ball was also very wide, but the batsman covered it, and was caught off the back of his bat by long-stop, now an obsolete place in the field. The bowler then requested to be allowed to go into the pavilion and get some brandy, but the captain thought that the capture of a wicket was a more suitable stimulant at 11.30 on a broiling July morning. (This was proved right, for Spencer was caught shortly afterwards from a ball by Cattley.) In this match Eton were put in to make 221 to win, a formidable task in those days for a school team in the fourth innings of a match. They made a bold effort, and as the score mounted rapidly the excitement was great. The ever-watchful 'Mike' was sufficiently calm to

notice that a bowler was being put on at the pavilion end who had already changed ends as often as the rules permittted. C. T. Studd, who was sitting near 'Mike' at the top of the pavilion, and whose lungs were of the soundest, was equal to the occasion, and shouted the objection to the wicket, and the breach of the rules was prevented. Eton made 201 out of the 221 required.

"Such was 'Mike's' anxiety for Eton cricket that he frequently at Lord's treated the ingoing batsman to a dose of sal-volatile, calculated to supply a kind of Dutch courage which covered the ordeal of the first over. I had some once. I hit the first ball for 4, the next for 3, and then got out!"

It is curious that the long-standing rivalry between Eton and Harrow should have always begotten a natural feeling of enmity between the schools similar to that which used to exist between England and France. It was as natural for an Etonian to hate Harrow as it is for stags to fight in the autumn. It was traditional, and it was innate. No such feeling ever existed between Eton and Winchester, whose rivalry was always of the friendliest order. Perhaps the fact that when we met at cricket we were always each other's guests, as it were, and behaved

as such, had something to do with it. But Lord's was neutral ground, and, in spite of the presence of fashionable London, we young barbarians nearly always gave vent to our feelings by acts not over respectable.

At the end of the match there was frequently an excited stampede across the ground towards the pavilion, cheering and counter-cheering began, the dark and light blues jostling each other in a mixed mass, then a spoken word followed by a blow, and I have seen a general scrimmage follow, in which the chief object was to smash hats with umbrellas. Then burly parents usually rushed in to prevent their offspring from making public asses of themselves, and sometimes they suffered in the process. Nett result: many hats irretrievably broken, a few black eyes, asseverations that the other school began it, then on cool reflection a feeling came along that Eton had not cut a very dignified figure, especially if Harrow had happened to win the match. On one occasion, after a shindy at the entrance gate, a noble lord, hailing, I must confess, from Eton, found himself in durance vile at Marylebone Police Station, and had to be bailed out by his friends.

One often hears of memories of the past being stirred up by the finding of old letters which have

lain forgotten in a drawer; but when an Old Etonian stumbles on an old match card mellowed with age, and with the pencil marks that he made on it forty years ago still visible upon it, he has a sudden vision of the brilliant circle of cheering spectators, of the beautiful active figures in light-blue caps and white flannels that he admired so much in his youth, and he wonders how many among them are still alive, and, if so, whether they ever think of the happy days when they so proudly represented their school at Lord's Cricket Ground.

CHAPTER XI

STORMING OF WINDSOR

"He that fights and runs away
Will live to fight another day."
—*Ancient Strategist.*

In the year 1874 an event of some importance took place in the adjacent town of Windsor, viz. a political election. Messrs. Roger Eykyn and Richardson Gardner were the opposing candidates, though there was a third, one Tally, an independent adventurer. One day he hired a cart, set it up in Brocas Meadow, and gave us his views therefrom. They were wild views, and did not accord with the ideas of upper boats; and, the contiguity of the river being too tempting, our friend, cart and all, took an involuntary bath in the Thames, amid the roars of laughter of the Windsor cads. Whether this incident put him out of the running I cannot say, but his competition with the other two was a negligible quantity.

As the day of election approached political feeling ran high on both sides, and placards were displayed in many windows; and since those of Roger Eykyn,

the Liberal, attracted a stray stone or so, we were at once forbidden to display any placards, compelled thus to a neutrality which we resented. But when this neutrality was further enforced by an edict that on the day of the election no Eton boy was to be allowed to go into Windsor at all, and not even into Eton itself until after the poll was declared, our souls, Liberal and Conservative alike, rose in open revolt. We protested that, even if we had no votes, it was a tyrannous interference with our wonted freedom of action, and our undoubted right to express our sympathy with one side or the other. We growled, but there was the Headmaster's order. The idea of being forbidden to cross Barnes Pool Bridge! Why, it was monstrous.

After "absence" we went in a body of about 300 to Barnes Pool Bridge, and there we were met by a determined band of masters, headed by Warre, who looked very solid with his broad shoulders, and carried a firm look behind his gold-rimmed spectacles. We tried every ruse. Mightn't we go to Sanders and Brown about a hat? No, we mightn't. Nor to Ingalton & Drake's for a book? No. We broke out into murmurs. It was a beastly shame. There was Barnes Pool before us, with the memories of a certain incident not unconnected with "Stiggins"

James, and yet none of us made a move. In the meantime some of the masters, apparently casually, strolled away up town, leaving the great Warre and one or two others to keep us in check. There are times when discipline is maintained only by sheer personality, for we were at least 300 to a handful, and could have done what we liked with the masters; but Warre looked very formidable, and whenever he raised his commanding voice we fell back. The fact was that, between the rowing and the volunteer corps, of which he was the moving spirit, he knew everyone of us by sight—at least we thought he did—and therefore we did nothing violent. All the same we grew restive, and kept pushing each other forward, till at last it was announced that after four o'clock, the hour when the poll was expected to be declared, we should be allowed to go up town, but not into Windsor on any account. Before the old clock had finished striking the quarter in Lupton's Tower we dashed away up Eton with a wild yell and whoop of triumph, running in a solid phalanx down the middle of the street, carrying all before us, but when we arrived in view of Windsor Bridge a sight met us which gave us pause. On the crown of the bridge a stalwart row of masters stood black and threatening. We now understood why so few were left to keep us

in check at Barnes Pool, for they had been sent on to stop us at the bridge. Was this to be tolerated? Were we going to stand there and tamely see them smiling down at us from the heights of the bridge? We were driven to our only resource, a frontal attack. With a "Come on, you chaps!" from our leaders, we put our heads down and charged in a solid mass up the hill. If the front rank had faltered, which they did not, they would have been pressed on from behind, so in an instant the line was broken, a few paltry captures made, and the bulk of us rushed through and on into Windsor. I left the torn lapel of my jacket in the hands of Walter Durnford, hoping that with my wriggles and grimaces he had not recognised me. If he did, he played the game, and refused to take advantage of any but a capture complete. Manley, the tailor, had much trouble afterwards in putting on a new lapel without the join being apparent, and indeed I did not dare to wear it again for some time.

On we sped, up the hill by the Curfew Tower, till we mingled with the crowd, who were cheering the speeches made by the rival candidates from the hotel. Here, to our misfortune, we became split up into smaller knots of boys as we made our way through the crowd. Flushed with success, we recked not how we should get back to Eton; we only knew we had

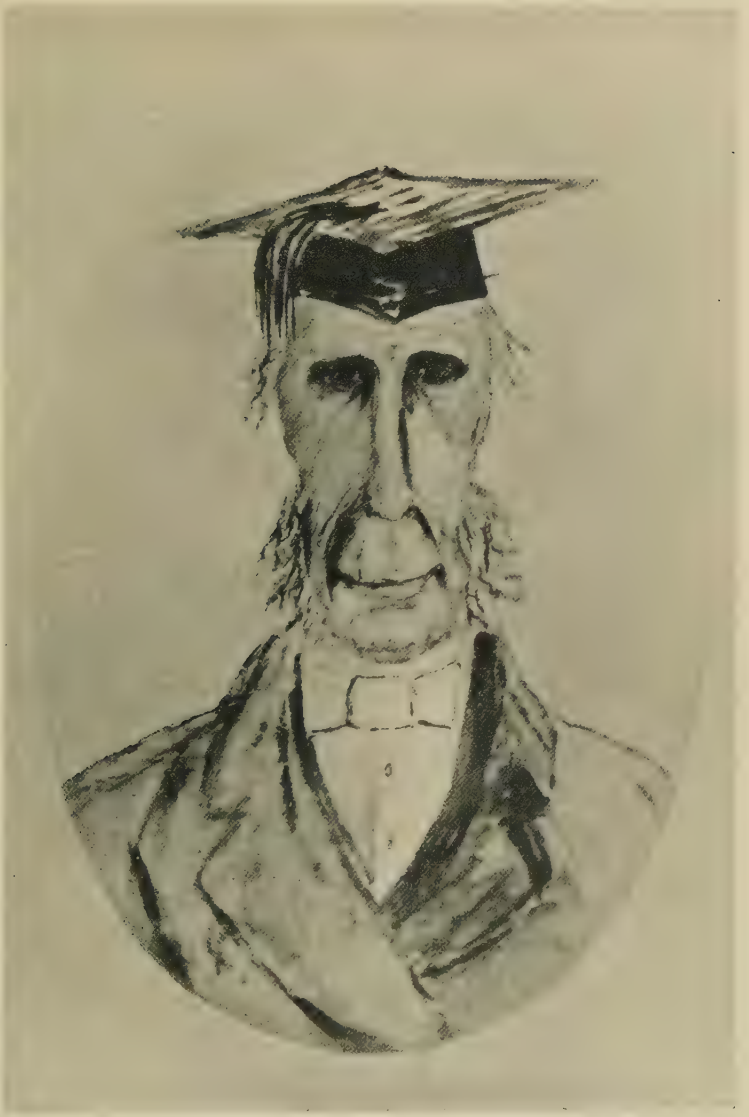
got into Windsor, and we didn't care a hang what happened, and so we lost touch with one another, losing all chance of concerted action. It was only when we heard news of masters on our track that we ran hither and thither in small companies, finding out too late, to our dismay, that Windsor was literally crawling with "beaks." We were like a crowd of rabbits, with no burrows to creep into, pursued relentlessly by a pack of organised weasels.

And here I must endeavour to follow as well as I can the fortunes of the various fugitives, and doubtless there were many hairbreadth adventures that day which have escaped the ear of the chronicler. One small band, running uphill as hares do, chose the highest ground and took refuge in the Round Tower, thinking to escape observation in that fortress, but there being but one entrance they were easily taken prisoners. Another band fled into Windsor Park, and, making a détour by way of Dedworth and Clewer, finally crossed the river in a punt and thus came home. One small hero, being chased by some master down what was then called Bier Lane, now called by the more euphonious name of River Street, leading to the Brocas, plunged in like Horatius Cocles, and hampered, not by armour, but by a tall hat, swam across the river and landed in triumph at the rafts.

Another band of about twenty took counsel together as to the best means of returning, and they resolved to go back to the bridge and, if it was still defended by "beaks," to collect forces and carry it again by storm. With this brave resolve they sallied down the hill, but no sooner had they arrived at "Damnation Corner" at the bottom of the Hundred Steps—so called since the old shirking days when you had to bolt into a shop if you met a master or sixth-form boy—than one little pedagogue, whose name I forget, appeared on the scene and called on them to stand and deliver their names. To obey was out of the question, to flee from such a shrimp was ignominious; the only thing to do was to vary the direction with dignity, and this was done by ascending the Hundred Steps. At least they had escaped recognition for a time. On they went with high hearts, unconscious of their doom, little knowing into what an ambush their pride had led them. Filling up the little cloisters at the head of the stairs stood a tall lanky figure, clad in a frock coat, and waving his prehensile arms about like an elongated anthropoid ape and saying: "Go back, go back, you naughtah boyahs." It was the Rev. Charles Wolley-Dod. "What a gentleman is," says old Selden, "'tis hard with us to define. The King cannot make a Gentleman of Blood, nor God Almighty,

but he can make a Gentleman by Creation," but I will maintain that God Almighty made this one. A schoolboy's definition of a gentleman would probably be, one who plays the game. Wolley-Dod certainly never relished the task of amateur policeman, neither did he consider it compatible with his dignity to rumple the gills of his stiff collar and disarrange the splendour of his white tie in an unseemly struggle with a set of wild youths; moreover, they knew by a kind of instinct that the sympathies of "Wollah Doddah" were with them, and that his resistance would be a half-hearted affair. And so it was. Some bent down and ran through his long legs as he stood with his feet wide apart, some wriggled through his arms, like tadpoles through reeds, and others scraped by, dodging the impotent grasp of those long arms. Of course he could have captured half a dozen delinquents if he had tried, but he didn't, and he was left working up a mock rage at our disgraceful behaviour, but secretly laughing at his own discomfiture, I dare swear.

When the noble band arrived at the castle gateway they were told by the bystanders, who are ever kind to Etonians in distress, that a master was up in the Round Tower making captures, so, like water, they flowed downhill, taking the line of least resistance,



THE REV. C. WOLLEY-DOD

From a contemporary caricature

coming out on the Terrace. And there the poor rabbits, thinking they were safe in so large a space, saw two small black figures approaching from each end of the Terrace, and another appeared at the place where they had entered. The two who converged were "Hoppy" Daman and Johnny Lock, the one with the long springy stride of the winner of walking-races, the other with his huge head bulging beneath his hat. "Hode Hede Toddy, all head and no body" was the rhyme we affixed to him. The name of the third, who had followed them and blocked the doorway of their entrance, has escaped me. Capture now seemed inevitable, for it was not to be expected that no future use would be made of a recognition by these masters; the spirit of the chase was upon them, and they were both men of disgusting probity; to expect them to look the other way when such a rich prize was in their grasp was contrary to nature and reason. To the hunted little band there seemed no escape. In front lay a precipice, behind were the frowning walls of the castle, and at each end two relentless "beaks," both cursed with an inordinate sense of duty. Better a suicide's grave than a dishonourable capitulation to these dreadful little men. Desperately they looked over the parapet, and, oh joy! someone pointed out a place, a little to the left of the entrance, where the

bank reached higher up the wall than elsewhere, making a drop of about fifteen to twenty feet down the sheer wall on to a steep slope of grass, terminating in some bushes and a path. Some threw their hats down first and followed by letting themselves down with their hands, others dropped hats and all, and, on striking the mound, rolled over and over like shot hares down a mountain side till brought up by the bushes at the bottom. When the masters met on the Terrace above there was not a boy to be seen, but out of shrubs below arose a derisive shout of "Sold again, Hoppay." They were now in the *sanctum sanctorum* of the castle, the private garden of the Queen herself, called in those days the "Slopes," and, had they fallen in with her Majesty taking the air, I am sure she would have been greatly amused at the battered scapegraces; but rumour had it that, when the tale of this unmannerly incursion on her private grounds was told to her in cold blood, she resented it so much that years passed by before she took the Eton boys into favour again. Had she known to what dreadful straits that band of fugitives were put by those two merciless little men, she would have been no more angry than if a hunted hare had blundered into her feet.

It was one thing to drop from the clouds, as it were, into a royal close; it was quite another to get out again.

As far as was known the only exit led into the palace itself. Oh that "Hoppy" Hardinge of Marinden's had been present! He was a page to the Queen, and knew his way about the precincts of the castle. He is now Sir Arthur Hardinge, and was appointed British Minister to the Belgian Court in 1906. He would have been a more welcome "Hoppy" than the one who had placed them in such a predicament. But royal pages, balloons, and fairies do not in this dull world come to the rescue of beleaguered schoolboys. They were yet uncaptured, and that was something for which to be thankful.

At the bottom of the Slopes was a stout brick wall at least ten feet high and unscaleable; in the wall was discovered a crazy old wooden door, a sort of ancient disused postern to the royal gardens. Could it have been used in past times for royal escapades? Could Prince Hal have slipped out o' nights into Windsor to join the fat knight and his tatterdemalions? There was no time to conjecture, or to bless the spirit of penury which stopped it up with wood instead of stout bricks and mortar. From several united rushes, such as are made when a rouge is turned into a goal at football, the old wood gave way, and the boys poured through, tumbling over each other and suppressing their laughter. Then the old door was hastily

propped up again and made to look as intact as possible, a heap of rubbish and time-honoured barrels surmounted, and they found themselves in the brewery of Neville, Reid & Co. Here friendly relations were immediately established with a portly tapster, who, in return for certain favours, gave them of the best ale, and promised to take them under the ægis of his protection. And indeed it was necessary, for a stout knocking was heard at the gate of the yard, which sent them all to cover behind the huge vats, and, when the good cellarer opened to him, Warre's penetrating voice was heard: "Are there any Eton boys in here?" "Eton boys, sir? No, sir," with a stupefied air, as if he had been asked whether they bred crocodiles or flying-fish in the yard. This danger past, he was sent as a scout to the corner of the street to tell them that the bridge was clear, and after some waiting, during which confusion to all "beaks," but especially "Hoppy" Daman and Johnny Lock, was drunk. Shortly afterwards stray pairs of boys were seen innocently strolling back through High Street; and, unless you had looked carefully, you would scarcely have noticed a torn trouser or so, or a hat battered more than usual, but it is a fact that most of them paid an immediate visit to old "Solomon" with the white hair, at Sanders & Brown's, to have their

hats renovated, and some of them visited their tailors.

Eton had been in a trespassing mood that day. Boys in the hurry of flight had bolted through houses and out by back doors, had scaled garden walls, had climbed trees to wait till the storm flew over, and one bold company had run through the South Western Railway station and out along the line across the bridge, over the river, and so home, as Pepys would say. Never was quarry so favoured by the bystander; instead of "Tally ho! gone away!" to disclose your whereabouts, it was "Come in 'ere, I'll show you a way out be'ind"; and yet we had had our differences with the Windsor cad. Had these occurrences taken place in a former age great punishment would have fallen on our heads, but Hornby took things very philosophically, and probably held the view that practically no harm was done, and so we heard very little about it afterwards. Of course the actual captures had to be dealt with, and many of us lived in a quake for some days, knowing that we must have been recognised. At the same time we had the proud satisfaction of having taken the bridge by assault and of seeing the tail end of the election. It was a great day.

CHAPTER XII

THE E.V.R.C.

"As long as mankind shall continue to bestow more liberal applause on their destroyers than their benefactors, the thirst of military glory will ever be the vice of the most exalted characters."—EDWARD GIBBON.

IN the early morning of a "non dies," a saint's day, after the boys' maid had left you but half-awake, you would be roused by the strident note of the bugle trumpeted forth by the full lips of Basil Thomson or Pixley in the street below, or perhaps on an ordinary day the same compelling sound startled you at breakfast, with your mouth full of a sausage from Atkins's or a buttered bun from Brown's, and then you realised the sacrifices which must be made by the defenders of this country. Under these conditions the chances of our fleet being bottled up in some distant part of the world, and of the bulk of our army being engaged by complications abroad, and of a sudden descent of either France or Germany upon our shores, necessitating an immediate call on us to defend Plymouth or Portsmouth—such being the gist of the arguments which induced us to join the Eton Volunteer Rifle

Corps, as it was then called—seemed far away and very problematical. Nevertheless, as you heard the challenging note repeated at the corner of the New Schools, and waking the echoes of Keate's Lane and other places with an insistence which brooked no delay, you swallowed your half-masticated bun, drank your tea at a gulp, and buckled on your armour, resolved to live and die a patriot.

The armour consisted of a pinky-grey serge uniform —which, in my case, was acquired second-hand from a boy of my size who was leaving when I joined—of a cloth so strong that I find it difficult to say how long it lasted in another form, and what rough usage it survived; in muddy weather short gaiters, into which we tucked our trousers, and a forage cap in the shape of what was called a "pork-pie hat" jammed on to one side of the head, leaving the other exposed to the weather, and holding on, as it were, by suction, the most ridiculous and useless headgear that was ever devised. The fact that the present Lord Midleton, then St. John Brodrick, was one of our keenest officers, leads one to surmise that perhaps the "Brodder" cap was evolved from the discomforts of his youth, for the forage cap was no protection from either sun or rain. Although the shako, surmounted by a woollen blob, which we wore on state occasions, had a flat

peak in front, it was not much better, since it carried a leaden design in its front as well as the blob; consequently it pressed heavily on the forehead. Soon the shako gave place to the helmet covered with grey cloth, but a helmet demands a man of stature to set it off, and a short boy under one of these extinguishers looked anything but imposing. Meanwhile the pork-pie cap held its own for years. Since the 'seventies many changes for the better have been made, and I am told that the Eton Volunteer has at last a place wherein to bestow his handkerchief, instead of thrusting it up his sleeve or sticking it into his bosom through the buttons, for he has now the luxury of four pockets to his uniform! In those days you sallied forth to parade tightly buttoned up to the chin, with a padded chest, and generally restricted about the armholes, in the spirit of "Rataplan, Rataplan, I'm a military man," and feeling that it was a mighty fine thing to qualify for your country's defence.

And the band! That was enough to strike terror into any enemy. About sixteen small boys were impressed into the service to make a noise for us. The drum could be practised on a table or a book, in or out of school, with two long pencils, till the proper roll could be obtained; but, with regard to the fifes, it was sometimes difficult to make out the tune till it

had been well started, for the drums did all the work at first.

One of the inducements to join the Volunteers was that, on parade days, you got off morning chapel, but it must not be supposed that the corps was the place for a loafer. Far from it. With a few exceptions the rank and file were all energetic people in other spheres. To stand stiff on parade in the hot sun or cold wind, to march and counter-march, wheel and double about the field, was a tiring beginning to the ordinary day's work. We used to drill in College Field, and on one occasion the company officer, whose name I shall not reveal, had a sudden and unaccountable fit of aphasia. We were marching in column, and in consequence of his silence the front rank found themselves up against the wall marking time, while the rest of the column was suddenly transformed into a struggling wall-game "bully," laughing so loudly that the tardy order to "Right about turn!" was lost on us.

Occasionally you were selected for the important duties of "marker"; then you had to run forward, calculate the length of the company, hold out your rifle at arm's length, and become the post on to which the line wheeled. You often allowed too little space, and, as the line approached, you heard murmurs of

"Get out, you ass! give us room," and then you received a surreptitious prod from a rifle which sent you skipping to your proper place, hoping the commanding officer had seen nothing. But he always spotted you.

Nature abhors straight lines, and there is always a tendency, even in the most sober persons, not to walk straight, but to edge in one direction or the other, to the right or left. This came out forcibly when in companies we marched "en échelon," as it was called. You, being the end man on the right, had to march in the track of the left-hand man of the company in front, and soon you felt the side pressure pushing you out of the straight, so you shoved back hard to keep the line in place, till someone in the centre of the line was squeezed out like a pip from a lemon. Then Warre thundered, and we had to begin all over again. As the critic is to men of letters, so is the "guide" to the company; he is hated, but he keeps them straight.

One of our exercises was the old-fashioned, and utterly useless, practice of volley-firing. Once only did it come in useful, and that was on the melancholy occasion of the death of Sergeant-Major Hobbs, when we gave him a military funeral and fired a salute over his grave. We were once practising volleys by snap-

ping our hammers on the leather snap-caps when someone surreptitiously put a blank cartridge into his rifle, which exploded with a bang, with the result that the delinquent was immediately disarmed and made to stand with the band for the rest of the day. No child put in the corner ever looked so sheepish as that joker. At another time someone inserted a pebble into his rifle when we were volleying with blank cartridges, and it whizzed close by Warre's head. As a rule our Major was slow to anger, but on this occasion his rage was so terrible that, in spite of his offence, I should have pitied the culprit had he been discovered; but he never was, I believe, because the stone had been fired in a volley, and no one could detect from whose rifle it came. Certain rumours, however, leaked out afterwards as to who was the author of this dangerous joke.

In those days our rifle was a Snider, with a thick stock and a huge hammer, and to the muzzle we sometimes fixed a very solid bayonet which usually depended from our belts. The two together made a very heavy and clumsy affair compared with modern weapons, and our shoulders were inclined to ache after a long day. The shooting Eight which represented the school at Wimbledon were promoted to the use of the Martini-Henry, a much more accurate

weapon. It was not often that we won the Ashburton Shield, for the claims of the river as well as cricket prevented us from sending so good a team as other schools, but I well remember the proud march of the corps through High Street from the station when the Shield was borne at the head of the column in 1878.

If moderately ambitious, your first aspiration was to "shoot your class" a *sine qua non* to becoming "efficient." You were marched off, probably on a broiling day, "after twelve," to the butts, which were erected beyond the railway arches, and told to adjust your sights to various distances from 100 to 500 yards; at 100 yards you were allowed to shoot standing, but beyond that distance you had to kneel on one knee, squat on your heel—a most painful position to some of us—rest your elbow on the other knee, and shoot so many rounds, hoping to hit the target shimmering in the heat. It was a position which nobody would dream of assuming in modern warfare, and one which, to me at any rate, appeared to give the maximum of discomfort and unsteadiness. We did it, however—shot our class somehow—and then discarded it for ever, for we never adopted it when skirmishing. Reports used to filter through to us of a wonderful acrobatic feat called the "Ford position," which was popular among the crack

shots at Wimbledon, in which a man lay on his back, hugged his own head and the stock of his rifle with his left arm, and shot from between his feet. We were lucky to escape this fearsome ordeal. Behind our target was erected an artificial mound, some twenty feet high, and a legend ran, confirmed by Sergeant-Major Hobbs, that an unoffending cow once met her death behind the butts from an unknown hand. Considering the recklessness of youth, we were singularly free from accidents.

But to return to our accoutrements. On the right side we carried a large pouch, which we filled with cartridges on field days and marches out. This, the Snider and bayonet, and sometimes a canvas provision bag, made too heavy an equipment for growing boys, and after a long march and a sham fight, much of which consisted in moving rapidly over rough ground, or carrying positions at the double, ranging over the open country at Burnham Beeches, or rushing through the heather at Chobham Ridges, it was small wonder that some of us were tired out next day. "I had a very jolly day with the Volunteers," wrote R. G. Seton in October 1876, "but it was certainly hard work. We had parade at a quarter past nine, and then walked to the South Western station, and went by train to Sunningdale, whence we walked to Bagshot

Ridges. After having divided into two companies we had skirmishing, then a luncheon . . . the hills are not easy to double up as there are a good many holes, and the heather is tiresome. . . . We marched at least fourteen or fifteen miles."

To some of us the short step, necessarily reduced to that of the man with the shortest legs, was peculiarly irksome on the marches, but all the same the field days were most enjoyable. Sometimes a surprised party objected strongly to the ignominy of capture, and a hand-to-hand conflict would ensue, begun in good humour, but ending in the clash of bayonets, a bruise or so, and the wrath of the commanding officer with the company officer for not keeping his men in hand.

In those days the corps went into camp at the end of the summer half, but it was not compulsory, and the boy could choose whether he went or not; camp, being attractive, was always fairly well attended. But nowadays, owing to the King's Regulations and the position of the corps as the "2nd Bucks," of which of course we are duly proud, nothing but a doctor's certificate will secure immunity from this duty.

While conceding to the full the value of camp to the boys themselves, as well as to the training of the corps, I think that compulsory camp is a mistake.

Coming, as it does, at the hottest time of the year, and perhaps after a very strenuous summer half, there is a danger of overstrain, which would be removed if camp were optional. There are plenty of cases where a doctor, finding nothing organically wrong, would not sign a certificate, and yet the boy may not be fit to undergo long field days in the hot sun on Salisbury Plain; and I know a case where, in spite of his parents' urgent protests that he was not fit, a boy was compelled to go to camp, with the result that his health was seriously affected for more than two years after. I mention this as an additional illustration to the remarks I have made in a former chapter of the tendency towards physical overstrain, which seems to be on the increase at Eton as well as other public schools.

In my day, camp was usually held at Remenham, a beautiful site on the banks of the Thames, and though, to my regret, I never attended it, many enjoyable and humorous incidents took place there. Canoe polo was a game sometimes indulged in, and a story reaches me concerning Walter Durnford, a determined little man with Napoleonic face and emphatic speech, a master very popular with the older boys, but regarded as a terrible martinet by the youngsters. He entered the fray in a large "Rob Roy," which stood

many shocks without being upset, whereas the lighter craft frequently turned turtle. This was naturally considered a mean advantage, so a plot was hatched to lay two canoes alongside of him on both sides at the same time, and attack him broadside, which succeeded, for, after a struggle, over he went into the water, and great were the rejoicings thereat. To everyone's dismay, however, he did not reappear, because he had been tied into the canoe by the apron, and after much diving and pulling of the canoe, he was fished out half-drowned, and fortunately none the worse.

There was always joy whenever a master, however popular, made himself ridiculous, simply from the fact that he was a master. The man, whose calling was to order you about and set you tasks, was reduced for the moment to your own level. He became human, divested of his cap and gown and of the *aura* of the division room. I seem to hear now the Homeric laughter which greeted the same master, who, when leading on a charge at the double down one of the Chobham hills, and happening to put his foot into a rabbit-hole, turned a most beautiful somersault, while his helmet flew one way and his sword another. The man who never makes himself ridiculous is in most cases a pedant, and this Walter Durnford was not.

Mr. Basil Thomson has furnished me with the following notes concerning camp :

"My military education had been stunted by my fondness for the bugle. When other Volunteers were passing through the various non-commissioned grades I was still running at the stirrup of Major Clements, the adjutant, and tootling the 'Cease fire' between my gasps for breath. When the corps went into camp with the 1st Bucks at Stoney Stratford, in August 1878, I came to the parting of the ways. I might be a colour-sergeant if I surrendered the silver bugle to a younger lip. I yielded to the flattery, being allowed as a solatium to sound the second post at night when no one was looking.

"When it came to the turn of the 2nd Bucks to provide the guard, discipline was not all that might be wished. One night I remember W—— (Sir John Willoughby), acting as a commissioned officer, was Visiting Rounds. The minutes passed, and he did not return. When at last Grand Rounds approached the guard tent, unchallenged by the sentry, he heard the sharp exclamations, of quasi-military import, such as 'Nap!' 'Blucher!' 'Wellington!' Visiting Rounds was in fact sitting down in the guard tent playing penny nap with the guard by the light of a tallow candle stuck in a bottle.

"It was the day of the great Field Day when my turn came to be sergeant of the guard. A hot day it was, and, by being posted within a stone's throw of the bathing-place, we were subjected to a temptation greater than we were able to withstand. There was besides a certain haziness in our minds as to the direction from which the enemy were to be expected. The tent had its back to the camp, and I remember impressing upon the sentry, who had bathed a little earlier in the day, that if by ill-luck Grand Rounds should happen in upon us, he was not to be overcome by the rank of the visitant, but was to present arms stolidly towards the opposite landscape and shout 'Guard, turn out!' The rest he might safely leave to me. Ill-luck pursued us that day. We could hear the reckless expenditure of blank cartridge a mile away, where a terrific battle was proceeding; not a soul appeared to be left in camp. It was the corporal who had seduced us from our duty. He had measured the distance, he said, and if the sentry kept his eye lifting and holloaed loud enough there was ample time to run from the bathing-place, tumble into uniform, and turn out (always excepting the lacing of the boots) before any kind of Rounds could reach us. And so we took one of the guard-tent saucers and dived for it in eight feet of water, and in the midst

of these sports came the awful summons. Personally I don't remember touching the ground once in the trajectory from the bathing-place to the tent, and though there was not a shirt between the ten of us we did manage to carry most of our clothing in our hands. But Grand Rounds had taken an unfair advantage of us: he was on a horse. I was just ramming my right foot into the corporal's left boot when I heard 'Guard, turn out!' and a 'turn-out' indeed it was. For the moment Grand Rounds was purple with anger at the proceedings of the sentry, who, in compromise between his duty and his respect for dignities, had turned sideways and was presenting arms at nothing in particular. This gave us a little time, but it was idle to hope that the Hegira from the bathing-place had escaped the eye of the adjutant. I was threatened with arrest and the loss of my stripes.

"Early in 1879, I think it was, I had my first field day as a colour-sergeant. It was on Chobham Ridges. I had the right section of two companies under the adjutant, who were to advance for a mile or two, until they came into touch with a superior force under Major Warre, before which we were to fall back into a small entrenchment called the 'Redoubt.' I was thoroughly imbued with the importance of taking cover, and I drilled this so firmly into the minds of

my men, that from the outset we vanished into space. As the extreme right of a long line of skirmishers, our track lay along a dry hollow dotted with furze-bushes. We kept our line admirably, as I thought, until we heard heavy firing on the ridge on our left. Our front was entirely clear, and as the firing seemed fiercest on our left and a little to our rear, it occurred to me as a masterpiece of strategy to change front and enfilade the enemy—'envelop his flank' was the term I used in explaining the movement to my men. But when we had crawled to the top of the ridge the battle had already surged past us. Our men were half a mile away, running up the slopes of the redoubt, and between us and them was the long line of the enemy, potting away as fast as they could load, but with their backs to us. There was nothing for it but to sell our lives as dearly as we could. Taking cover in a gravel-pit close at hand, we opened a hot fire upon the rear of the enemy. I expected to see a company detached to mow us down at close quarters, but for a time nobody took the slightest notice of us. Our men were firing from the redoubt: the enemy were beginning to climb its slope, when Major Warre turned his horse in our direction. He thought that a section of his own men had been stricken with temporary insanity, and he galloped right to the edge of the gravel-pit

before we let him find out his mistake. Then I leapt from my cover, and, in tones in which I hoped firmness was admirably blended with respect, I said: 'I'm afraid you're my prisoner, sir,' and I troubled him for his sword.

"'Stuff and nonsense! You ought to be in the Redoubt. You couldn't be where you are; you'd have been wiped out; we're only the advance-guard of an army. This position would have been swarming with men.'

"'In real warfare, sir, we should have shot you unless you surrendered.'

"'Stuff and nonsense,' he said; 'well, we'll argue that out afterwards. Cease fire!' he shouted to his bugler, who was running up breathless—and so the battle ended.

"We argued it out with great good-humour, and of course I got the worst of it. In the official account of the action printed in the *Chronicle* my stroke of genius was described thus:

"'All would have been over but for an eccentric movement on the part of Colour-Sergeant Thomson, who led his section into a position where they must have been instantly wiped out by the attacking force. He, however, claimed to have taken the commanding officer prisoner.' And I claim it to this day."

There were always a few grumblers who laughed at the Corps, alleging that we were only "playing at soldiers," and complaining that we never shone at Wimbledon, and facetiously dubbing us "Dog-potters," but, considering the energy devoted by so many to rowing, in addition to the various activities of the school, the efficiency of the corps was quite creditable. The drill, old-fashioned and ramrod-like as it was, improved our carriage, the field days taught us the rudiments of attack and defence, and who shall say that the knowledge of how to handle a rifle and shoot with moderate accuracy was not a great advantage?

There are also those who preach concerning international peace, and prophesy that, so soon as the world shall lay to heart the glorious principle of the brotherhood of man, war shall be no more. Would that it might be so! We are certain, however, that while the interests of nations clash, if one party to a dispute thinks it worth while to go to war, no convention will prevent it. Happily the enormous cost of a war acts as an effective deterrent.

We live in close neighbourhood to, and in keen commercial rivalry with, a nation whose natural ambition is to acquire ports for the development of her increasing trade. That her officers are compelled to resort to the sword in all cases of private dispute

is only an instance of the spirit of militarism which dominates the country. Heligoland, since we gave it to her, has become a fortress, and we hear of "long quays" for the rapid embarkation of troops at Emden. It is quite possible that the bulk of our fleet may be needed in a distant region; therefore, is it not common prudence to make ourselves patently, and even ostentatiously, efficient on land? Doubts have been expressed as to the adequacy of the Territorial force as a national defence, and there are rumours of slackness in recruiting.

This is largely an employer's question. At present he pays for his patriotism, for he has to give extra holidays for the training of his employees for which he gets no proper return, while the unpatriotic employer gives no holidays, furnishes no recruits, and competes with him in trade, and it remains to be seen how long the patriotism will stand the strain.

The only really satisfactory solution of the difficulty is compulsory service. This, of course, would be very expensive, but the indirect benefit to the nation, both physically and morally, would be enormous. How often has enlistment in the army or service in the navy saved an irresponsible youth from a career of crime? The fresh air, exercise, wholesome food, and discipline given at an impressionable age, would

do much to turn the future wastrel and hooligan into a useful member of society, and perhaps he would become a better breeder of men. To the youth accustomed to flout his schoolmaster, and to range wildly about the streets in search of excitement of some kind, and who has never obeyed anyone in his life, a short term of military discipline would be of the greatest value. When we come to consider the rapid growth of late years in the mass of the unfit, which creates an ever-increasing drain on the national resources, we may come to the conclusion that universal service, although expensive, will be one of the most effective remedies.

It is good for us all at some time in our lives to obey someone implicitly, and although our service in the Volunteers was not much better than playing at soldiers, nevertheless we gained a certain idea of the value of military discipline just in the same informal way that the Boy Scouts are educating themselves on similar lines. It was treated as a sober game, but at the same time we possessed all the enthusiasm of a voluntary body.

Some of us were inclined to deprecate the abolition of the Volunteers and the inclusion of them in the Territorial force, and there were doubts as to whether the semi-compulsory system would produce the same

enthusiasm. Now that the Eton Volunteers are included in the system with the magic letters O.T.C. to their name, let us hope that they will still add their quota of keenness towards the present scheme of National Defence.

CHAPTER XIII

"POP"

ἄνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῷόν ἐστιν.—ARIST. *Pol.* I.

WHEN Novalis said that every Englishman was an island, he certainly did not mean to imply that we lacked sociability amongst ourselves; he probably had in his mind that mixture of gaucherie, shyness, or pride, call it what you will, which prevents a Briton from speaking first in a company of strangers. As a nation we are inexpressibly awkward and tactless towards foreigners, but are easy-going enough when we club together for a common end, and associate for a common interest.

I suppose the Eton Society is the most select club in the world, but what its common end or interest is it would be difficult to say. Ostensibly it is debate, but a man never attained a seat in that supreme council on account of his power of speech, nor indeed for his wisdom, nor entirely for his prowess in the field or river. You could not wheedle yourself into that sacred assembly, for I have known that method

tried without success: a schoolboy knows a sycophant when he sees him as well as a man. It was that indefinable quality, good-fellowship, which is born not made, whereby entrance to that inner circle was obtained. If he could be generally described as a "good chap" amongst his peers, and was popular, and also had acquired some sort of athletic or intellectual distinction, a fellow was usually elected. One is surprised, however, to find how often the insight of the club was at fault, and how many charming and delightful personalities failed to gain entrance into that select ring, and it may be that these good qualities were not so patent as in after life. Certain it is that the limit in numbers to twenty-eight made their chances the narrower. Sometimes one heard rumours of an antagonism between dry-bobs and wet-bobs resulting in counter-blackballing, and then some colourless individual got in, but I am glad to think that this was a rare occurrence.

Once inside that charmed circle, a man became a different being; it was the difference between a person and a personage. He had a halo to wear, and the point was to wear it becomingly and with grace. He was canonized for the time being, and the honour, though short-lived, was so great that the wearer could hardly be blamed for thinking that he was in a fair

way to be distinguished for life. It is comforting to think that the obscure members of the Society, who have drifted into the humble occupations of the ordinary citizen, who have fought with poverty and ill-fortune, and perhaps been wrecked by the storms of life, should have had their little triumph, their demi-godhead, in their youth. A seat in that House of Lords conveyed to its possessor a security for the time being which no after-conferred peerage could give. His authority was unquestioned; he was sometimes both judge and executioner; for if he was a man of leading in the school, like some boroughs which possess a sword implying the ancient power of life and death, he carried a cane, and I am bound to say that the justice dispensed was usually tempered with mercy. To receive a few cuts with a cane was preferable to a kicking, and the greater authority of a member of "Pop" was enforced by the milder punishment. It is generally agreed that the name "Pop" was derived from "*popina*," a "cook-shop," because the original habitation of the Society in 1811 was a first-floor room over Mrs. Hatton's "sock-shop," on the site of what was afterwards Drury's house, and is now swallowed up in the New School Hall.

The memory of the Eton Society is always associated in my mind with the smell of stables, for that,

and the hissing of grooms as they cleaned their horses, came into the window and gave a sporting aroma to our debates. Our room, which afterwards became part of Mr. Byrne's house, gave on to the yard of the great Charlie Wise. My cousin, A. D. Coleridge, has described the Charlie Wise of the 'forties; our Charlie was no less a sportsman than his forbear. Thick-set, dark, and florid, he was the hero of the Eton and Windsor Boat Club, and rowed many a race in the Windsor Regatta with a straw sticking out of the corner of his mouth like the pictures of "Pam" in *Punch*, and if you wanted a tip for Ascot or the Derby, why, Charlie always knew a thing or two, and you took the risk of his being wrong.

But in spite of noises and smells our debates were carried on with a seriousness and decorum sometimes absent in larger deliberative bodies. Our speeches were for the most part couched in what I might call the go-as-you-please style; there was no pretence of oratory, but thoughts hastily conceived and hurriedly delivered on the subject in hand, which finally found their last perfection in the Debate Book which chronicled our wisdom. When the lower boy brought it from the previous speaker, you sat down and composed something worthy of posterity; your points were there, and you put them as

you wished you had put them. You were in a position similar to that of the Canadian statesman who had delivered a speech in Parliament after having dined, when a pressman, having a difficulty in reporting it, went to the statesman himself for assistance. "Read it," said the latter. On hearing it he cried: "That's not what I said at all! What I said was this; you had better take it down now." And he delivered a telling speech on the question at issue. "Look here," said he in conclusion, "you are a young man, and want to rise in your profession. Take my advice, and never report speeches again when you're drunk."

The Debate Book was to us what the typewriter is to an author; it gave us a chance of reconsidering ourselves before committing our speeches to cold writing. We could boil down our impassioned iterations, we could tighten up the looseness of our argument, and we could flatten out our adversary with deliberation; it almost amounted to the joy of writing a controversial sermon which none can answer. If a protest was raised by your opponent, you winked, and retorted "ὁ γέγραφα γέγραφα," and I believe some of the mutilations which the letter of the chronicle sometimes received afterwards were due to the righteous wrath of a disgusted opponent.

It is possible, I believe, for the curious inquirier to turn over the musty volumes of the "Pop" book and find Gladstone's Tory opinions fossilised in faded ink, and other youthful extravagances of many great ones of the earth. It would be an interesting study to see how many of them held to their opinions through life.

Those of George Curzon, if I may call him so, would scarcely be repudiated by him to this day, for, being the protagonist of Conservative ideas, he soon found himself the uncrowned leader of a Government perpetually in power, for Liberals were always hopelessly in the minority in the Society. Arthur Chitty and others might make sly reference to his command of language as glibness of tongue, specimens of oratory, and the rest, but when the house divided the Tories had the day. A Liberal majority in "Pop" would indeed have been an extraordinary occurrence. It is interesting to record that reform of the House of Lords was repudiated in 1874 by a "large majority." The kind of subject which produced a warm and animated discussion was one such as, "Has the present Government vindicated its claim to existence?" This was actually proposed by Alfred Lyttelton on one occasion, and the Ministry severely taken to task. He was beaten in the end,

for the Society was true to its Conservative instincts. Once, indeed, Women's Suffrage was mooted in the 'seventies, and only two were found chivalrous enough to vote for it; we tried to imagine a republic in Greece or Rome swayed by women, and came to the conclusion that they could only govern barbarians. Sometimes we soared into high subjects, as when we attempted to follow the brilliant J. K. Stephen in his comparison of the merits of Aristophanes and Euripides.

But however abstruse or common the subject, the mere discussion of it in our boyish and tentative way was an excellent influence in forming our ideas, and it would be a great thing for the school if a larger debating club were established, not indeed as a rival to "Pop," but as a nursery of speakers in which the art of debate might be cultivated. "Pop" is too small, too select to contain all the representative elements in the school, and yet I would not alter it. It would still remain an Upper Chamber, while a school debating society, limited to certain upper divisions, might be beneficial as an educative and binding force, tending towards the formation of a healthy public opinion in the school. At any rate it is worth a trial.

It was about 1878 that Mr. Gladstone made some

criticising remarks with regard to Eton, in a speech delivered to another school, which were resented at the time by Etonians. "We thought, and I think rightly," says C. M. Smith, "that he might have told us of our shortcomings to our faces, but that to speak of them to another school was treasonable.

"Shortly afterwards he gave a lecture in the Library, and by way of amends called us the 'cream of all the schools in all the world,' &c. It was during this visit that it fell to me, as president of 'Pop,' to show our most distinguished old member over the Society's rooms. It was not until I was on the stairs that I remembered that his portrait had been turned face to the wall. It hung just inside the door, on the left-hand side, and I had just time to run up and turn it the right way round before he entered the room, and I don't think he noticed that it was still swinging."

Earl Curzon of Kedleston has kindly furnished me with the following note:

"'Pop' consisted of twenty-eight members, three of whom were elected as officers, designated respectively President, Chairman, and Auditor. The President presided over the meetings in a high-backed oaken chair, with green upholstery, raised on a small

step, or dais, at the head of the room. His two colleagues faced each other in chairs of rather inferior dignity and dimensions on either side of the fireplace. The mover of the motion of the day took his seat at the end of the writing-table at the opposite end of the room facing the President, and the remainder of the audience were disposed on low seats, or settees, covered with dingy green material and ranged along the walls. The second officer was called Chairman, because he was supposed to preside over committees; he also kept the accounts. I was myself Auditor, and presumably inspected the Chairman's accounts; but I have no recollection of doing so, and am not clear that I was an Auditor in any other than the classical sense of the term.

"The duty of opening a Debate devolved upon the members in succession. Two subjects were propounded a week in advance by the two members whose turn had come; and the rest of the Society chose between them by signing their names on the notice paper underneath the motion which they preferred. By a decree of exquisite but necessary ingenuity, the members who had secured the choice of their motion were then obliged to speak upon it, so that in this way a sufficient number of orators was always secured.

"The speeches varied from harangues of consider-

able merit—to the preparation of which a certain amount of labour had been devoted—to stumbling performances of a few minutes', or even seconds', duration; but the entire sitting lasted, as a rule, about three-quarters of an hour, or an hour. The shortest debate that occurred during my time was over in thirteen minutes—on the not too stimulating subject of the new swimming dress invented by a Captain Boyton. But sometimes a debate, probably on a political subject, was found to be so interesting that it was adjourned.

"The *Chronicle* and *Etonian* gave brief and sometimes humorous descriptions of the debates, and in a leading article on October 28, 1875, the *Chronicle* proudly, but not without sarcasm, remarked, in explanation of its recent fuller reports, that 'the brilliancy and well-sustained oratory heard recently in the Society has (*sic*) gone far to remove any prejudice arising from the fact that members are not always elected with reference to intellectual powers.'

"On another occasion the remark appeared: 'We were glad to see a certain member, who seconded this debate, at last discover that the carpet is not the only thing to be addressed, and that one might, if he wished, speak above a whisper.'

"'Intelligent anticipations'—or sometimes the

reverse—of future events may occasionally be traced in the reports of these august proceedings. In November 1874 we find that 'the President (now the Right Hon. Alfred Lyttelton, M.P.) in summing up a debate on the question whether Mr. Disraeli's Government had vindicated its existence (which he stoutly denied) refused to be convinced by the brilliant oratory of the seconder (now Lord Grimthorpe, a Liberal Peer), or by the pungent wit and pointed satire of Brodrick (now Viscount Midleton).'

"When, on February 8, 1875, H. E. Ryle, K.S., 'in a clear and forcible oration urged the necessity of adding to the number of Bishops, proposing that the Episcopate should be doubled, that a smaller sum should be devoted to the present bishoprics, and that bishops should be deprived of their seats in the House of Lords,' can he have dimly foreseen, through the haze overhanging the future, that the day would come when he would not merely be a bishop (of Winchester) himself, but would resign both his bishopric and his seat in the House of Lords for the perhaps scarcely inferior, though less paid, dignity of the Deanery of Westminster?

"When G. N. Curzon wrote to the *Chronicle* in March 1878 to protest against a remark that had been attributed to him in the report of a debate in

'Pop' that 'Italy is surrounded on all sides by water,' and incidentally remarked that 'geography is a subject on which I should, as a rule, shrink from expounding my ideas to others,' could he anticipate that thirty-three years later it would be his duty repeatedly to perform this very operation, to much larger audiences than 'Pop,' as President of the Royal Geographical Society?

"It is not my recollection that speeches, when recorded in the Journal Book by their authors, assumed a very different form, though doubtless it was often a less inchoate shape than when delivered. The general tendency was to get rid of the unwelcome task as soon as possible, and to send the book on. On a Sunday in July 1878 I conducted Mr. Gladstone, who had come down upon my invitation as President of the Literary Society to lecture to the school on Homer, and Mrs. Gladstone, into the rooms of 'Pop'; and there I remember how eagerly he routed out the old Journal Books, and looked up the speeches he had made when a boy, and the sometimes astonishing votes that he had given. Am I inventing, or am I trusting to a fairly reliable memory, when I seem to recall one occasion on which he had proposed a motion, and then, convinced by the eloquence of its opponents, had ended by voting against it? He was

greatly pleased at the painted and framed photograph of himself hanging on the wall, and when we left the place and escaped the mephitic exhalations of Charlie Wise's stables, he took me across the road and showed me on the grey-stone top of 'the Wall,' nearly opposite and about six yards from what was then J. P. Carter's house at the chapel extremity of the Wall, his own name cut in large capitals by himself when a boy at Eton. I have searched for it since, but all trace of it has now disappeared.

"Votes of thanks were always accorded to the retiring officers of 'Pop,' and a similar vote was occasionally passed to a member who had rendered exceptional service in debate, and to whose name an asterisk was henceforward affixed in the framed list that hung upon the wall.

"One of the most valued privileges of the Society, which was a Club as well as a debating-room, was the use of a special stationery. There were two varieties of this paper; one bearing the title 'Eton Society' and printed in light blue, the other a monogram containing the three initials P. O. P. intertwined and printed in darker colours. When I was recently at Eton I was told that the latter form of address is not now known.

"I should have added that any member who could

not make up his mind which way to vote after a debate 'went behind the chair,' and his attitude was so recorded in the Journal.

"There was, of course, immense competition to be elected to 'Pop,' which set the hall-mark of success upon an Etonian's career. Voting was by ballot, and strange liberties used sometimes to be taken with the ballot-balls. I remember one candidate in my day who, with a voting strength at the meeting of eighteen members, received no fewer than twenty-four black-balls; and, in its report of a debate in November 1872, we read in the *Chronicle* that the 'President called attention to the fact that the balls belonging to the ballot-box had sadly decreased in number owing to the mischievousness of certain members who amuse themselves by taking shots at the aperture in the box. He hoped that the members would discontinue this foolish and undignified practice.'

"Visiting the room of 'Pop' more than twenty years after I had left Eton, and conversing with the members who happened to be there, I learned to my dismay that at that time debates seldom lasted more than ten minutes, and that members did not think it worth while to record their observations (indeed, there can have been none to record) in the Journal. There was a talk, I believe, of bringing in the Masters in

order to resuscitate the debates. Whether this was done or not I have never heard : but one does not require to be a very prejudiced *laudator temporis acti* to aver with some pride that things were very different in the 'Seventies. One of many explanations of this may be that in those days old members of the Society, some of them M.P.'s, not infrequently came down and took part in the debates, encouraging the boys and setting a standard which was of value. But the main reason was that the abler boys were proud of speaking well, and that a spirit of emulation, and even a sense of duty, prevailed.

"No doubt the prevailing political atmosphere was Tory—so I fancy it always is at the old Public Schools—and political motions were usually decided in that sense. But there was one occasion on which the traditional Conservatism of 'Pop' was outraged by the act of even a Conservative Prime Minister; for the *Chronicle*, in reporting a debate on the Royal Titles Bill in 1876, exclaimed with poignant emotion : 'Many an Etonian, past and present, will inwardly grieve when he is told that the Conservative party was on this occasion in a minority of three. Such is the sad truth.'

C. OF K."

CHAPTER XIV

THE LITERARY SOCIETY

"For a man to write well, there are required three necessaries. To read the best authors, observe the best speakers: and much exercise of his own stile."—BEN JONSON.

SOME of us who did not gain entrance into that inner brotherhood of learning, the Literary Society, look back upon it as one of our lost opportunities. Occasionally we heard upper boys discussing some abstruse question, the subject of some lecture, in a superior way, and we felt some misgiving that we were below the level of their thought. Those of us who frankly despised book-learning regarded the Society as a symposium of "saps" and "Tugs," and passed it by on the other side. But if we read our *Chronicles* diligently, certain scraps of information reached us of lectures delivered by the pundits of the great outside world, such as Ruskin, Gladstone, Sir John Lubbock, Sir James Stephen, Dr. Carpenter, and Scott Russell, &c., and sometimes we saw that some towering swell in Sixth Form had burst forth in a paper on some learned topic—for instance, Alfred Lyttelton on the character of Swift, or J. K. Stephen

on Oliver Cromwell; but the accounts consisted chiefly of the opinion of the writer on the paper, garnished with the usual compliments to the lecturer.

These reports were necessarily curtailed on account of the exigencies of space, and it seems a pity that there should be no journal of the transactions of the Society published wherein the lectures might be preserved for the outsider to read. Such a journal would amply prove to the future historian that the thoughts and interests of Etonians were not entirely confined to athletics and the cult of the body. Unless a man publishes his lectures in book-form, as Scott Russell's on "Geometry in Modern Life," they are lost to the world, and one bewails the number of fascinating treatises which perish stillborn in manuscript. Looking back on the Society after so many years, an outsider is tempted to regret that it kept itself confined to the very elect, and that a larger number were not induced to join its ranks, for it is impossible to overestimate its value as an educational influence. In my day no effort was made to advertise the Society among the humbler Etonians of average intellect, and the result was that it gained a reputation for priggishness and aloofness which was certainly not deserved.

Mr. A. C. Benson has kindly sent me the following:—

"I do not know what the precise circumstances

were which led to the inception of the Literary Society. I only know that when I came to Eton in 1874 it was in full working order, and that the rooms of many Collegers were adorned by an immense sheet of the printed rules and regulations of the Society, edged with dark blue ribbon, and attached to the wall by florid brass nails. It was very characteristic of Eton ways that the whole thing should be left to the boys. The Society held its meetings in the old school library—that delightful room long since destroyed—which was at the end of New Buildings, and the door of which was in the north tower at the end of Weston's Yard. The room owed its grace, I have always believed, to the cultured mind of Hawtrey. It was a big place, designed in a somewhat rococo style of Gothic, a little redundant perhaps, and too much depending upon plaster of Paris as a material. The spaces were panelled with linen pattern. There was a big fireplace with standing lions, also a stained-glass window, now in the museum; and a gallery ran round the room, conducting one to two strange little chambers above—one containing a collection of birds, the other with some casts of coins and models of Etruscan tombs. In these rooms it was possible to obtain complete seclusion, and one could ensconce oneself there after twelve, with a

volume or two, sure that no one would break in upon one's adorable peace. There was a great gas chandelier, of flamboyant design; the floor was well carpeted; and the whole room had a real character, from its warmth, its darkness, and its pleasant silence. Here the Literary Society met in the evenings of Saturdays. But they not only held meetings. They collected their own subscriptions, and owned several hundred chairs, which were kept in the Brewhouse [1] and brought out for the lectures. Is there a school in the world where the whole business of the public lectures there delivered is in the hands of the boys? The president used to ask whom he would to lecture. The secretary had the tickets printed and distributed them. The moving of the chairs into the room was all paid for by the Society. The masters had to ask the boys for tickets, and the entire direction of the whole affair was in the hands of the president. The only difficulty was to provide for the entertainment of the lecturers, and the president used to billet them upon some good-natured master. It was a system which no one would ever think of originating, and yet I believe it taught the boys order, exactness, aplomb, and courtesy.

"I was elected into the Society about 1878. The

[1] Doctors disagree. *Cf.* p. 254.—G.C.

meetings were then well attended, absentees being fined. A certain number of masters were elected Honorary Members, and the proceedings were of a stately kind. A member read a paper, from a standing desk, which was afterwards discussed, the masters being invited to speak by the president. It was rather too solemn an affair. Many members never spoke at all, and it was a matter of considerable nervousness to rise in one's place and address the assembly.

"The lectures were really the best features of the Society. I have heard Ruskin, Matthew Arnold, Gladstone, and other distinguished men lecture there, all invited by the boys. The best lecture, without a doubt, which I ever heard there was one on Nelson, by Frederic Myers. The first sight of the lecturer gave us little idea of what was coming; a quiet, rather stately man, with a sanguine complexion and a short beard, stepped to the desk and began to read in a low restrained voice. But there was something fiery and emotional about the long reverberating sentences which kept us excitedly attentive. The reader's voice gradually rose to a sustained and majestic pitch, and the whole thing became a tide of rich and glowing eloquence, which was maintained until the end.

"Matthew Arnold's lecture on ἐντραπελία was a stately and impressive discourse too: I remember the close curls and big whiskers of the speaker, his great mobile mouth, his courtly air. But that was rather a *succès d'estime* than a rhetorical display.

"There was another very amusing conversational lecture, on the first principles of political economy, by Bonamy Price, who kept the whole audience in a delighted titter by his sharp questions and his high laugh. He held up at one point a very battered top-hat before the assembly, and said in shrill tones, 'Now, why is this hat worth a sovereign?' It was so plain that a shilling would have been an exaggerated estimate, that there was a shout of laughter, after which Bonamy Price said, 'It's worth much more than a sovereign to me; it's an old friend.'

"Gladstone's lectures were tremendous affairs. His prestige, his pale face, his blazing eyes, his sweeping gestures, and the *timbre* of that marvellous voice, which had an almost physical effect upon the nerves, kept the audience spell-bound. But I remember wondering how it was possible that one should not be able, afterwards, to recall a single point of a discourse which at the time seemed the most important communication ever vouchsafed to the world.

"Ruskin's early lectures, strange to say, I can

hardly recollect at all; they seemed to me fanciful and extravagant.

"If the lecturer was dull, the audience was small and talkative. No amount of renown stood a man in any stead, and I am ashamed to think of the discourtesy with which we treated some venerable men who took the trouble to address us.

"I was present at one very memorable scene; it was a lecture delivered in the Drill Hall, for the sake of showing some lantern slides, by Spottiswoode, the president of the Royal Society.

"At the end of the lecture, in reply to a vote of thanks, he said with the utmost emotion that it was a great pleasure to him to come to Eton; he went on to say that many years before, to his own lasting shame and to the inexpressible grief of his parents, he had been expelled from the school for disorderly conduct. The announcement was received with awestruck silence. The fact was that Hawtrey, when headmaster, had issued a notice against fireworks on the 5th November, and had committed the fatal mistake of saying that any boy who disobeyed the order would be expelled. Spottiswoode, a boy of great industry and stainless character, had been caught letting off a squib, and Hawtrey had not dared to go back upon his own edict.

"Gradually I began to take part in the proceedings of the Society. I read papers and spoke at the meetings; and in 1880, to my great surprise and delight, I was elected president for the following year. It was not a happy choice. I was an obscure and indolent boy, very much averse to putting myself forward, and with no moral courage. The result was that the Society did not flourish. I did not pull up the members who absented themselves, nor did I see that the subscriptions were collected. The result was that the meetings were miserably attended. I partly atoned for this by getting a good set of lectures, writing to several distinguished people with marvellous effrontery. Our great success was securing Mr. Ruskin to lecture. He was on the verge of one of his bad illnesses, and he would accept no hospitality. He said he would lecture on Amiens, and he sent some pictures for me to show to the members beforehand. I took, I remember with shame, no steps in the matter, except to put them in the library, where I believe they still are. As Ruskin would not dine with anyone, but asked for a room to sit quiet in before the lecture, I consulted Hornby, who said he would have a fire lit in Chambers, and would send in a cup of coffee. In the course of the evening I received a message from the matron in College to

say that a gentleman wanted to speak to me; and there in the matron's room, I found the great man himself, in dress-clothes: I remember the old-fashioned cut of his high-collared coat, his long linen cuffs, his white kid gloves, and, more than that, his long hair, his heavily burdened face, and the glance of his blue eyes. He was vexed to hear that I had neglected his requests. I took him to Chambers, where he talked to me for a little, very delightfully, and I recollect his pleasure at finding that I had read all Walter Scott's novels. Then he said he was tired and must rest, and I can see him now, as I left the room, with his head bent down on his hand. He lectured brilliantly. The first sentence was very elaborate; and it turned out afterwards that he had for once in his life forgotten his manuscript; so that after his first sentence, which I think he must have scribbled down in Chambers, he became conversational and discursive. At the end he gave me a little sign with his hand. I walked down the crowded room with him among the cheers; he shook hands with two or three people, stepped into a closed carriage and was driven away.

"The cause of the failure of the Society as a debating club in my time was mainly that it had become the fashion to belong to it, and that many members

of 'Pop' and athletes chose to belong without having any interest in literary things, just to have the rules to hang in their rooms and to get a few tickets for the lectures. I cannot remember the system of election; but I think that any member might propose a candidate. Eventually lists were handed round, and members marked the names they preferred. Thus the conspicuous boys were practically sure of election, while many boys who really cared about books never got recommended at all.

"When I came back as a master in 1885 the same thing was going on, but by this time it was even worse, because the Society had come to depend largely on masters for reading papers. I must have read half-a-dozen papers in those days to the Society. At the same time the occupation and distractions of the place had so increased that, unless lecturers were very well known, they used to address a dense mass of empty chairs.

"It became clear at last that something must be done. A pupil of my own was elected president; the whole affair was carefully discussed; and the Society dissolved itself. The lecture arrangements were put in the hands of one of the masters, and a small Essay Society was founded, with a master as perpetual secretary, which took the trouble to elect

only boys of literary tastes, and kept the numbers small enough to promote easy discussion. The meetings used to seem to me to be exactly what was wanted, and I have reason to believe that it has done excellent work ever since.

"There is much to be said, no doubt, in favour of the boys having the management of their own societies; it develops a wholesale independence and teaches business habits. But there is more to be said in favour of their being subjected to informal supervision. Boys are very susceptible to social claims; a society or a club of any kind acquires a certain prestige, because it is natural to human nature to want to be inside anything. The result is that at a school prominent boys are apt to desire to find their way into all institutions, and it is very difficult for less prominent boys to resist the charm of patronising for one blissful moment a successful athlete or social swell.

"There was an interesting document in existence in my time at Eton. This was a black book in which Lord Curzon, a former president of the Literary Society, had written out at length what he considered the scope and aim of the Society to be, and had appended advice for future presidents. The composition had a natural magniloquence about it which

was impressive. This book was to be handed down to successive presidents, but it stuck somewhere, not in my hands, and is now a private possession.[1]

"It is interesting, because it reflects the high ideal of culture which characterised a particular generation of boys, who were very prominent about 1876. J. K. Stephen, Sir Cecil Spring Rice, Mr. C. Lowry, now headmaster of Tonbridge, Archdeacon Burrows, and Lord Curzon himself were among these boys, who were all strongly under the influence of Mr. Oscar Browning. Indeed I remember as a small boy listening in the library to an animated discussion on some political point between Lord Curzon and Mr. J. Wallop; I was amazed and even stupefied, I recollect, at their eloquence and the maturity of their diction: but the good point about the intellectual interest which existed very strongly in those days was that the wit and common-sense of J. K. Stephen and others kept it perfectly natural, and saved it, as a rule, from priggishness. They talked about books and politics and ideas simply because they were interested, and without any sense of superiority or any sacrifice of livelier practical issues. Those were, I think, the palmy days of the Literary

[1] It has now been rescued, and has been returned to the boys' library at Eton, I believe, and enshrined there.—G. C.

Society; but the resignation of Mr. Browning had dealt a severe blow to the intellectual life of the place, for the simple reason that it was natural to him to seek the society of intelligent boys, and to talk to them on terms of equality about the things which interested him. No one ever attempted the same thing on the same scale, or with the same socratic enthusiasm. He encouraged shy boys to discuss bigger ideas, he put books in their way, and, best of all, he loved and practised leisurely talk. The same thing had been done before by William Johnson, who had an almost greater inspiration, and a similar power of meeting boys on perfectly equal terms—gifts which may be developed, but can hardly be imitated.

"I do not think that the effect of the Literary Society when I belonged to it was of very much account. We were some of us encouraged to write papers—the only essays, I regret to say, that I ever had to write at school; but the discussions were formal and timid, and the tone was respectful, rather than enthusiastic. The literary spirit, indeed, in my day at Eton was a very dilettante affair, which showed itself in the starting of small unsuccessful periodicals, and in the vague turning over of a good many interesting books. But it was all very loose and untrained; what we wanted was a smaller and more concentrated

society; more meetings, and some friendly older critic, who would have pulled our papers tenderly to pieces, and shown us that structure was more important than texture, and that a patchwork of unconfessed quotations was not an honest or a useful literary document.

"The Society had, in fact, no homogeneity and no actuality. It was transforming itself into a social distinction, and it was mainly useful as a kind of lecturing agency which catered with fair success for the tastes of the school.

"But the fault lay in the system of instruction. What we needed was direction; but the old arrangement of the correction of verses took up the time and abstracted the energy of the masters, who really had neither leisure nor opportunity to take the Society firmly if unobtrusively in hand. Out of an education professedly literary, and with the extraordinary amount of private leisure which, at all events, clever boys in my time enjoyed at Eton, I think that something more definite ought to have emerged. Considering the high quality of ability which was to be found in the school at my date, it appears to me that a better sort of literary interest ought to have been engendered. I do not feel that Eton has affected the literary spirit of the time as might have been

expected. The system, in its bold freedom, has undoubtedly contributed largely to the political life of the country, and among my contemporaries there is a high percentage of eminent public men. But I feel that literature is not duly represented, and that the mistake, if mistake there was, was that literary feeling was not focussed or directed, but sacrificed to what was almost a morbid dread of interfering with the boys' independence and liberty of action."

Concerning the Society in his day, Earl Curzon of Kedleston has generously written the following :

"In his interesting note about the Literary Society, Mr. A. C. Benson has referred to a 'black book in which Lord Curzon, a former President, had written out at length what he considered the scope and aims of the Society to be, and had appended advice for future Presidents. This book was to be handed down to successive Presidents; but it stuck somewhere, and is now a private possession.'

"The whereabouts of the book in question having been since discovered, and the volume replaced in my hands, after the lapse of over thirty-three years, I have been able to refresh my memory about the Society, with which I had a good deal to do, and thus to fill a number of gaps in Mr. Benson's generally correct

reminiscences. I do not suppose that the annals of a defunct Public School Society can be of much interest to anybody. But there was something about the Eton Literary Society, relatively short-lived as it was, that differentiated it somewhat from the ordinary type of such institutions; while a few of its youthful supporters were of sufficient intellectual mark to justify a passing reference to their early doings.

"The Society owed its foundation to Oscar Browning in 1871, and was one among many marks of his keen desire to stimulate literary tastes and a fondness for independent reading among the boys. Its original title was the Eton Literary and Scientific Society: but Science played so small a part in the Eton curriculum of those days, and there were so few boys (not to say masters) who were qualified to read scientific papers, that this part of the functions, no less than of the title, of the Society fell into abeyance; and it was always known as The Literary Society and nothing else. For a short time it was placed under the direction of a Committee of Masters. But as soon as it had established itself, the management passed exclusively into the hands of the boys. The Masters, or most of them, were Honorary Members, and as such were invited to attend the meetings, and took part in the discussions, but not in Pri-

vate Business. Without their assistance the debates would often have languished; and sometimes they read papers also. For the rest the Society, which consisted of thirty members, was composed entirely of boys. In order to maintain the literary standard and tone, every Sixth Form boy had a right, when invited by the President, to join, and this was properly regarded as a fundamental principle of the constitution. Profiting by the experience of 'Pop,' where the use of the ballot-box led to strange and inexplicable performances with the ballot-box balls, the Literary Society preferred the method of selection, any member being at liberty to propose the name of a candidate with his consent, and the members present putting a mark against as many names as there were vacancies to be filled. The Presidents who preceded me (I held office in 1877–8) may, I think, be said to have justified their selection. They were, successively, A. A. Tilley, now Fellow and Lecturer of King's College, Cambridge; C. C. Lacaita, son of the Italian scholar, and friend of Gladstone; J. E. C. Welldon, afterwards headmaster of Dulwich and Harrow, Bishop of Calcutta, and now Dean of Manchester; R. (now Sir R.) Ritchie, Permanent Under-Secretary for India; A. Lyttelton, at a later date Colonial Secretary; R. E. Pashley, who died prematurely,

and J. R. Harmer, successively Bishop of Adelaide and Rochester. There were two other officers—the Vice-President, whose duty it was to keep the accounts and make a financial statement at the end of the half, and the Secretary, who kept the Minute Book. (I wonder, by the way, what has become of this?) My Vice-President was W. O. Burrows, now Bishop of Truro, and my Secretary was Jim Stephen, the brilliant and ever-mourned.

"Now let me recall a meeting as it was in my day. We met fortnightly on Saturday evenings in the old School Library. At the upper end of the room Oakley, the benign and spectacled Librarian, had drawn up one of the leather-topped tables; the officers took their seats at the head and two sides of this, and the author of the paper read with a shaded light illuminating his MS. The audience sat on either side, with their backs leaning against the walls, originally on the small leather-topped stools which were the solitary form of seat permitted to a student in the Library in those times, later on upon the cane-bottomed chairs, of which I was the proud purchaser, and of which I shall speak later on. I can see the massive head of Stephen by my side as I write this, his pencil hard at work all the while drawing figures or composing fantastic verses and rhymes on sheets of paper. One

of these poems in English hexameters appeared in the '*Etonian*,' and later on in his published works. R. J. Smith was reading a paper on Pompeii, after which

"'Jones was the next to rise, and he made us a crushing oration,
Crushing but pointless withal, like a seventy ton steam hammer,
(Study that last line well—observe the onomatopœia).'"

"As soon as the applause that greeted the conclusion of the paper had subsided, the President looked appealingly around. Sometimes a master responded, sometimes a boy. There were occasions on which he had to throw himself into the breach and inaugurate a discussion that very likely proceeded merrily enough for nearly an hour. Once we adjourned a discussion on the Duke of Wellington after one and a half hours, and continued it for another hour at the next sitting. And now what were our subjects? I take a few from recollection. Richelieu, the Sun, Martin Luther, Ancient Egypt, the Progress of Liberty (read by one of His Majesty's present Judges of the the High Court), Cremation, Dante, New Zealand, Oratory—Ancient and Modern (I perpetrated this myself, as also a paper on the French Revolution), Secret Societies, Aerial Navigation. Can I have been an unconscious prophet? Anyhow it is written in the *Chronicle* that 'Curzon tried to invent two

parties, balloonists and machinists, created Tatham leader of the former, and then proceeded to attack him, supporting his machine theory by amusing stories.' In a debate on the Crusades, opened by the present Bishop of Rochester, Stephen 'considered it a sign of great moral improvement that such wicked and abominable institutions no longer exist.'

"Benson records that in his day a few years later it became the fashion for the swell athletes in the school to join the Society, which lost its intellectual *raison d'être* and became a merely social distinction. This certainly was not the case in my experience; although, mainly owing to the presence of so many collegers in our ranks who excelled at the Wall Football game, the Literary Society twice, in 1873 and again in 1876, challenged the School at the Wall, and on each occasion beat them handsomely.

"And now let me say a few words about the Society's 'chairs,' to which Mr. Benson has alluded, because I happened to be the protagonist in that modest drama. I will record it in the words of the Black Book (which is henceforward to repose in the Eton School Library).

"In 1876 Harmer and I determined to buy some chairs for the Society in order to avoid the expense of hiring them from the local upholsterer. Hearing that the Musical Society were also anxious to buy a

large number of chairs for the same reason as ourselves, we at once opened negotiations with Mr. Mozley (the well-known mathematical master), who represented them. He wanted 400 chairs for use at the Society's concerts: we wanted 200 for our lectures. The Musical Society being presumably rich and the Literary Society poor, and Mr. Mozley being of a facile and generous disposition, an arrangement was arrived at by which 400 chairs were to be bought, the Musical Society paying for 300, and the Literary Society for the remaining 100. The logic which justified this division of payment was as follows. The Literary Society want for their lectures 200 chairs, the Musical Society for their concerts 400. If the Literary Society pay for 100 chairs, and the Musical Society for 300, then the former at their lectures will use 100 chairs belonging to the latter, and the latter at their concerts will use 100 chairs belonging to the former.

"I am sorry to say that I entrusted the commission for these articles to a member of the Society who happened to be passing through High Wycombe, and a few weeks later I was startled to see coming along the High Street of Eton several wagons laden with huge, heavy, and inconceivable wooden chairs, of the so-called Windsor type. Fortunately, I was

able to dispose of them at an infinitesimal loss a little later and to purchase a lighter and more suitable consignment at the moderate price of 2s. 8d. each. These we were permitted to store in the College Bakehouse, and I was never more proud than when Mr. Mozley presently discovered that he had been rather 'done' in the transaction, and was glad to receive for the Musicians a solatium of £2 from the Literary Society in order to alleviate their discomfiture.

"Our Society did not exist for papers only, important as these were. One of our main functions was to provide Lectures by distinguished persons for the School. Here, again, the entire management was left in the hands of the boy President; and I still have in my possession a sustained correspondence with Mr. Gladstone, prior to his first visit to lecture to us at Eton in 1878. The subject was Homer: and I remember how he traced a series of entirely fanciful analogies between the figures in the Old Testament and those in the Iliad, to which the Classical Masters listened with wide-open eyes, but which the boys were quite content to swallow because of the amazing charm and sonorous eloquence of the speaker. Among other Lecturers who came down in my time were Professors Charles Newton and Sidney Colvin, Sir John Lubbock, Dr. Carpenter, Mr. Ralston, Mr. Scott Russell, Mr.

Douglas Freshfield, and Mr. E. M. Ward, R.A. Of three other lectures I have a vivid recollection. I can see the vast head, the heavy pendulous jaw, the long and curling locks of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen (father of Jim Stephen), as he stood at the desk and spoke to us about India: and I have elsewhere mentioned that it was his address on that occasion that first turned my attention to that country, which has since absorbed so much of my life.

"I arranged for a lecture by Commander Cameron (brother of one of our Eton Masters), then just returned from his great trans-African journey, in the College Hall—a considerable venture for our Society—and I can recall the small figure and modest delivery of the explorer. But the Lecturer whom I remember best, because my communications with him as President led to a correspondence and acquaintance that continued for years at Oxford—was Professor Ruskin. He lectured, I think, three times while I was at Eton; on the Spanish Chapel at Florence, on the Streams of Westmoreland, and on the Swallow. But I may say at once that the title of the Address was wholly immaterial; for after a few introductory words had been uttered, the lecturer, whose thin, frail body and loose, untidy hair and mobile features I can still picture as the light of the lamp fell upon them at

the table—would wander away into a rhapsody of fanciful thoughts and glowing phrases, in which he appeared to be equally oblivious of his subject and his audience and to be pursuing a visionary journey in remote celestial fields. For instance, his lecture on the Spanish Chapel at Florence contained, *inter alia*, a fierce attack on the historian Niebuhr, a denunciation of the British tourist, a diatribe upon the British Constitution, with an excursus upon rain. It made no difference—boys and masters alike were enraptured and transported. I have a recollection of another passage about the squirrel—it was really an impassioned soliloquy upon which the audience appeared almost guiltily to have trespassed (I don't know, and it did not matter, in what context it occurred)—but it held us spell-bound for minutes.

"I still venture to think that a Society which served this double purpose of stimulating the boys to write papers (perhaps not always very original) and to make speeches on interesting subjects, and of bringing down to Eton famous men, served a good and laudable purpose: and, when I ceased to be President on leaving Eton in July 1878, it seemed to be assured of a prosperous career. But only two years later Benson, who confesses to considerable lassitude as President, was found recording in the Black Book—to which he

was the last contributor, before it was appropriated by one of his successors—that there was a growing tendency to overlook the ordinary meetings and papers, and to come only to Private Business for its excitement, and to lectures for their interest. Attendance ceased to be urged or enforced, the fines for non-attendance were not exacted because of their unpopularity, and the Society was allowed to lapse into decay. Benson has narrated how when he came back to Eton as a master in 1885 he assisted to convert it into a Society, with a master as Secretary, and membership confined exclusively to boys of literary tastes. I hope that this younger offspring continues to flourish. But there can be no harm in erecting this humble memorial to the parent society, while it still flourished and was in its prime. As with school periodicals and magazines, so with school societies, the tastes, the needs, and also the talents of different generations differ greatly: and each under the inspiration of particular, though often fugitive, influences, finds the outlet that expresses and suits it best. C. OF K."

The purely literary productions of the school during the 'seventies were not many. Two very remarkable productions for a schoolboy appeared anony-

mously, called *A Day in My Life at Eton, or Everyday Experiences of Eton*, and *About Some Fellows*, by G. Nugent Bankes, in 1877 and 1878. In these two little books he satirised the members of Mr. Cornish's house and his schoolfellows in general in a good-humoured way, using pseudonyms, and making clever composite photographs of their characters. They furnish amusing reading to this day. Unhappily it somehow leaked out that he was the author, and, boys being the most sensitive people in the world, he incurred some undeserved obloquy in consequence. We objected to this "chiel amang us taking notes," but I fancy some of us wished we had written them ourselves.

In 1875 a school paper of a more literary flavour than the *Eton College Chronicle* was started by Sandbach and H. St. Clair Feilden called the *Etonian*. A similar publication had been brought out under the same name by W. Mackworth Praed, John Moultrie, Henry Nelson Coleridge, and others in 1821 and 1822. In the summer of 1876 G. N. Curzon became sole editor, and sometimes wrote an entire number himself, which must have been a considerable addition to the ordinary school work, seeing that the paper was issued once a fortnight. His chief collaborators were J. K. Stephen, K.S. (author

of "Lapsus Calami"); C. Spring Rice, K.S. (now British Minister in Sweden); and M. T. Tatham, K.S. Occasional outside contributions appeared from such as E. Knatchbull-Hugessen, M.P. (afterwards Lord Brabourne), and Sir Wilfrid Lawson, M.P. After the summer half of 1876 the labour became too great for Curzon, and the *Etonian* came to an end. The pick of the contributions, however, were collected by Curzon and published in 1877 in a small volume entitled *Out of School at Eton*, which contained several notable poems by Stephen.

There was no pretension to literary style about the *Eton College Chronicle*, which was started, I believe, somewhere in the early 'sixties by W. Wightman Wood (now a County-court Judge) and J. E. Tinné, and, with the exception of some metrical prophecies of the results of races, has confined itself mainly ever since to the narration of athletic events. I add the following, written by J. K. Stephen in 1877, with a free translation, as a specimen. It is entitled "The Hurdles and Quarter of a Mile." "The following poem, evidently of great antiquity, has been found in College, written in Greek character. It seems to bear upon the events of to-day, and we present it to our readers just as we found it, hoping that they will decipher its ancient words and expressions."

Εἰς Νότιον Λειμῶνα θεασόμενοί ποτε Ῥακοῖς
Ἦλθον Ἐτωναῖοι μετὰ δώδεκα· πρῶτος ἐν αὐτοῖς
Τρηΐος ἦν Γρεύφιλλος ὃς ἦν Βωτῶν καπταῖνος,
Θαυμαστὸς καππῷ, καὶ μὴν πόλυ φέρτερος ἄλλων.
Τὸν περιέστησαν, σὺν τοῖς κάνεσσι, Σιέλλοι,
Ἄρχοιτες δημοῦ, κηπορδερέσοιτες ὅμιλον.
Ἐνταῦθ' ἦν Σμιθεῖς, βωληρόστοι μὲν ἄριστος,
Βέλτιστος δ' ἀνδρῶν δηβατούντων ἐνι Ποππῷ.
Αὖταρ Κολλενέρων ἦρχον Σμιθεῦς τε μεγιστος,
Καὶ μετὰ τόνδε Μακανλεῖος, βρίαυος, Στέφανός τε,
Καὶ Βυῤῥοῖς, ἥρως δ' Οὐέλλσλιος, Ὀρκίνιός τε.
Καὶ Σπρυγρείκιος δι καλέομσιν Κολλέγεροι Σπρῖγξ.
Τῶν δ' ἀρ' απ' Ἠφανίοιο δόμων σὺν Χίττιος ἦρχες,
Καὶ Κροφτος φιλέρετμος, Ἰώσηφ τ' Ανδερσώνης.
Δοδδαιῶν ἦρχον, μετα δαιδαλέοισι κολῶσι,
Δοιγλασίοιο δίη και Κυρζονέης Ωράτωρ.
Καὶ παρὰ Κητσλάνοιο παρῆν Σανδαῖμαν ἐνῶρμος
Καλόέρτος τε, μακρὸς δηαῖνδος, ἀπ' Αἴγερος αὐλῶν.
Τῶν Καμηρονίων ἦρχον Στιδδεῖς κρικετῆροι,
Ἑλλιότης τῶν Μιχηλῶν σὺν Πῆρσι ποδώκει·
Ἄρχιος Ἀλαιῶν ἦρχεν Παρχῆρος· ὁμοῦ δ' Ὑς
Ῥίδλειος σὺν Βαιλείῳ μετὰ Γρεῖον ἕποιτο
Δαλτόνιδες. Μιλλεις σὺν Γλαῦκι δομοὺς Ἰακώβον
Ἀρτούρου λίπον· οἷς και Ποισονβοῖος ἑταῖρος.
Τοιοῦτοι πάντες κάλμωστ ὠλσχύλιος, ὄχλος
Εἰς Νότιον Λειμῶνα πόσιν ῥαπιδοῖς ἐφέροιτο
Ὀψομένοι Ῥάκοις καὶ χαμπιόνας χηροῦντες.
Ἔννεπε Μοῦσα τοποὺς τῶν νικώντων ἐνι Ῥακοῖς
(θυκ "Ἑκατοι"—σμικρὸν Ῥάκον σμικροῖσι προφηταῖς)
"Κορτέρου," "ὑρδυλίων" τε σὲ δεῖ μοι Τίππεα δοῦναι.
Ὦ χαλεπὸν χαλεπὸν Λουρεντῆ ἐσσέται βητεῖν
Ἐν φλαπτῷ Ῥάκῳ δολιχόσκιον· Ἐλλιοτῆς δὲ
Οὐ πόλυ σλωΐων, ἢ καὶ φαστέστερος ἔσται·

Ἥε τρίτος Μιλλεῖς ἔσται, σκουλλοῖσιν ἄριστος
Ἥε Μακαυλεῖος φιλοφηλδῆς καὶ φιλοτείχης.
Κόρτερος εἴρηται· νυν ὑρδυλίους δησκρίβω.
Πρῶτος τ' Ελλιοτῆς, ἥρως τ' Οὐέλλσλιος ἔσται
Δεύτερος, ἥδε τρίτος δολιχόσκιον ὦ Λαυρεντῆς
(Εἰ μη ὑπτρίφθεις τοῖς ὑρδυλίοισι) γενήσει.
'Αλλὰ χρονικλείους σὺ μὲν 'Ηδιτῶρ πολυτλήμων
Τρεσπώσσειν ἐν σαῖσι φαλυαβυλαῖσι κολυμναῖς
Φαίνομαι ἀτλενγθῶς, κλεῖνος πὲρ ἔων Ποιήτης.
Τοιαῦτ' οὖν λείπω ῥηδηροῖς ἥδε κρίτιξιν
Υμετέρος τε μένω σινκμρῶς Γῶστος 'Ομηροῦ.

"Into South Meadow once came Etonians to see the races after twelve. First among them was Grenville Grey, Captain of the Boats, wonderful in his cap, far more eminent than the rest. The swells stood around with their canes, ruling the crowd, generally keeping order. There was Smith, best of bowlers, best of debaters in 'Pop.' Besides Smith came as head of the Collegers; after him Macaulay, Brian (Farrer), and Stephen and Burrows; the heroes also, Wellesley and Hawkins, Springrice too, whom the Collegers term 'Spruncks.' And from those of the house of Evans you Chitty came first, and Croft, lover of the oar, and Joseph Anderson. From Dod's, with curiously wrought colours, the strength of Douglas and Curzon the orator led the way. And from about Keate's Lane appeared Sandeman, the huge, and Calvert, the long behind, from Ainger's house. The

cricketers, Studd came from the Cameronians, Elliot of Mitchell's with Pierse, swift of foot came Parker together with Sus Ridley, with Bailey, after Grey came those from Dalton's. Mills with 'Glaucs' left Arthur James's, of whom Ponsonby was companion. All these, and a crowd of almost the whole school, were borne on swift feet towards South Meadow to see the races and the champions. Tell, O Muse, the places of the winners in the races. (Not the Hundred—a small race for small prophets.) For the Quarter and Hurdles you must give me tips. O hard, hard it will be to beat the long-shadowed Lawrence; but Elliot is not very slow—yea, verily, he will be faster. Either Mills will be third, best with the sculls, or Macaulay, lover of the field and of the wall. The Quarter is finished. Now I will describe the Hurdles. First will come Elliot, Wellesley the hero second, third will come Lawrence with the long shadow (unless he trips over the hurdles). I appear to have trespassed a long space, O long-suffering Editor, on your valuable columns, for I am a minor poet. These things I leave to your readers and critics.—I remain, Sincerely yours,

"GHOST OF HOMER."

To quote the words of an Old Etonian: "The *Chronicle*

has maintained the same level of unpretentious and uninspired respectability. It is always patriotic, but makes no affectation of literary form." Nevertheless, I am grateful to it for recalling the names and achievements of many who have long since passed out of ken and of events still interesting for an old boy to read. One can scarcely imagine Eton without its *Chronicle.*

CHAPTER XV

THE MUSICAL SOCIETY

"Keep him at least three paces distant who hates bread, music, and the laugh of a child."—J. C. LAVATER.

THE Musical Society was founded, I believe, somewhere about the year 1863 by Spencer Lyttelton, Hubert Parry, and others, and was from 1868 till 1872 under the guidance of Dr. Hayne. His successor, Dr. Charles Maclean, good musician though he was, lacked the organising power and the vitalising influence to make music fill its proper place in school life. Partly during his time and that of Dr. Hayne, the Society had gradually dwindled in numbers to about fifty members, and there was no general enthusiasm for music in the school. Therefore it was a great day for Eton music when Joseph Barnby became succentor and organist of Eton College Chapel in 1875. The man who could train an Albert Hall choir was the very man we wanted. Short, thick-set, with a tongue full of breezy sarcasm, and a Napoleonic air of command, he appealed to us at once.

A leader in music is as necessary as in politics or any other combination of human activities, and many qualities are required to make a good conductor. The personality which holds in check a large crowd, the quickness to detect the smallest mistake, and the power of dramatic interpretation which makes you feel the music, and raises the executant above the mechanical producer of sound, these Barnby possessed to the full. None could render the swing and rush of a chorus better than he, and the support which he gave with the big stops of the organ to our full-throated praises in Chapel, except on the one historic occasion with which I have dealt elsewhere, was characteristically enthusiastic. His "Carmen Etonense," a worthy rival to "Dulce Domum," has the true ring about it, and, when sung by a large body of male voices, will hold its own with any school song. His taste for melody doubtless aided his happy choice of the musical *pabulum* for our consumption. We were too young for Bach and the intricacies of counterpoint, and not sufficiently cultivated to appreciate Wagner and the moderns, consequently we were fed on the simple fare of Handel, Haydn, and Mendelssohn, with pinches of Purcell, Gibbons, Sterndale Bennett, and Smart, &c., thrown in here and there.

Once a week, and also on Sundays, we held our

evening gatherings in the Organ Room of the New Schools, which in the early 'seventies served as Lower-Boy Chapel. Facing us, the great Joe presided at the piano, showing us by voice and hands how some noble passage or chorale in a great oratorio should be rendered. The *Messiah*, the *Elijah*, *Saul*, the *Seasons*, *St. Paul*, and the like, all had their turn, and well did they serve to lay the foundations of a musical education. We could not render a delicate passage too softly for him, and, if we did not sing it to his liking, he would stop suddenly and say: "Look here, you fellows, you are not cheering at a football match; you are breathing a prayer"; and when we rollicked through a chorus, such as "The waters gather, they rush along," in the *Elijah*, how he would make the old piano ring with the accompaniment! Then, when you sang a wrong note, you were suddenly conscious of his keen eyes fixing you from behind his spectacles, and you pretended innocence by looking severely at your next-door neighbour; but all to no purpose, for he would remind you of it at the end of the piece. If the offence was serious, he stopped, shouted out your name, and played the ghastly discord on the piano, accentuating your peccant note with, "That's what you're singing," while you made a wry face, and all the company

stared at you in disgust at being stopped in full career. Accurate reading at sight came quickly under these conditions.

Two voices stand out in the memory as being transcendent above the rest, voices that would be notable in any choir. That of the late Arthur Dunn, whom we nicknamed the "Squirrel," was the most perfect specimen of a boy's soprano I ever heard, and it was remarkable in that he retained it in all its flexibility long after the time when most boys' voices break. I doubt whether it did eventually break in the ordinary sense of the term; it merely deepened, without any transition stage, into a tenor voice of ordinary quality. But before this change the "squeak of the Squirrel," as we termed it, was a delight to hear.

Gifted with a true ear, he was incapable of singing a note which was incorrect by a hair's-breadth, and, possessed of a certain dramatic power which found its expression without conscious effort in the voice, he could throw a world of pathos and sweetness into the melodies which he was called upon to sing. There were no operatic flourishes or tremolos, gymnastics so dear to the trained singer; and the difference between his rendering of "O for the Wings of a Dove," for instance, and that of the paid choir-boy, whose

name I forget, who showed us how well he could do it when he sang it in Chapel, well illustrated the contrast between simplicity of expression and a conscious performance.

The other voice was that of J. C. B. Eastwood. In a chorus there is nearly always a leader, answering to the first violin in an orchestra, who follows the baton of the conductor with such precision that in the beginning of a passage he is sometimes the fraction of a second in front of the rest. In reality he is strictly in time, and the others, who sometimes have their eyes on the music, trusting to the ear, are just a thought late. His personal equation is a rapid one, and his voice follows his eye with perfect unanimity. Such an one was Basil Eastwood, and his correct lead was always a safe one to follow, like that of a sporting parson in the hunting-field, and his rich baritone was most useful at the school concerts for such solos as "The Shipwright" by Molloy, and ballads of that kind.

Many pleasant memories are associated with these evenings in the Organ Room, spent under the auspices of Barnby in our efforts to master some noble piece of melody; there the hacks and bruises of the football field, the punishments set by wicked "beaks," the jealousies and disappointments of youthful com-

petition, were forgotten as in a dream, and many abiding friendships secured through the bond of music, which never touches men's souls but for their own good.

The patriotism of an Etonian consisted chiefly of two enthusiasms—the one for the honour and success of his House, the other for that of the School, and the latter was cemented and deepened not a little by the societies here described. By their agency the dry-bob and wet-bob, the scholar and the idler, the swell and the plebeian, met together and rubbed shoulders for a common end; and if you try to imagine what Eton would have been without their influence you will probably confess that it would have been rather a sorry place.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ETON SPIRIT

"Floreat florebit."—A. C. AINGER.

AN ancient institution like Eton, which is constantly in the public eye, is peculiarly liable to criticism, even at the hands of her own sons, and when attacks are made on her, it is well to consider such to see if they are just. True criticism, however hostile, should be welcomed.

Not long ago, indignant protests were raised at the so-called vandalism of the authorities in removing the exceedingly ugly, but tolerably ancient, iron railings from the cloisters, whereby a better view of the close and buildings might be obtained. This, of course, is an artistic question on which experts may differ, but the fuss occasioned by this small change is an indication of the interest taken in the place by past members of the school.

Again, sharp controversy was raised quite recently over the enormity of allowing the boys to wear soft shirts in school! At this little sign of moving with

the times there are those who are ready to cry out that Eton is going to the dogs, and that an era of slovenliness is begun.

It has been hinted in the preceding pages that Dr. Hornby was not one of our strongest Headmasters, that he was too much of a recluse, that his discipline was lax, and that we did not learn as much as we should have done. In a book entitled *Eton under Hornby* published in 1910, and written by one who veils his identity under the initials "O. E.," much emphasis is laid on these faults, and we are asked to believe that Eton was a sorry place in consequence. He has come to his hour "of disillusionment," and he sees his old school with an "altered eye"; but he wishes to see her "flourish in a different sense." The boys were "youthful savages" in Hornby's time; "they would bombard each other (and even the innocent passer-by) with pea-shooters, squirts charged with ink or water, and lumps of coal"—imagine the school where such things do not occur—and yet in all his stories, some of which are very amusing, there is not one which points to a low level of degradation.

But it is in a chapter headed "Brawn *v.* Brain' that he brings what he appears to consider his heaviest charge against the school. The fact that Mr. Mitchell

gave advice, *when asked*, to the captain of the eleven "certainly marked the advent of professionalism in the cricket field." What would he have said had he remembered old "Gaffer's" services up to "Rushes" and back?

"There was, of course," he says, "one strong reason why the idleness of boys at Eton was more invincible than elsewhere, and that was the greater wealth of the families from which the bulk of the school was drawn." We have heard a good deal lately of the sins of the "idle rich," but it is not the fact that their sons were more idle than those of parents of moderate means. Idleness at school is not the result of a full purse, but of temperament. It is perfectly true that, in a few instances, parents gave their sons too much pocket-money—a great temptation to gamble and spend foolishly—but these were exceptions, the average amount of pocket-money being about £5 a half, out of which in those days you practically supplied your own breakfast and tea. In after life, no doubt, the want of having to work for a livelihood tends towards idleness.

One's memory in middle life often plays one false, but "that the huge part which flesh played in our diet was as injurious as it was revolting" has entirely escaped me. We were certainly a smaller race of

boys than they are now, as I have pointed out in a former chapter, and I have not heard that the larger growth is caused by any diminution in the supply of meat. We did suffer from scrambled meals, for the short half-hour allowed for our one heavy meal at midday was insufficient, especially for those who did not possess perfect teeth.

There is one statement regarding the Eton Mission which deserves, perhaps, more than a passing notice. This is what he says :

" The object of those who promoted this charitable institution was doubtless beyond praise, but it is obvious that such charity, though it might benefit a few individuals, could do no lasting good either to the upper classes or the lower, to those who give, or those who take. It cannot benefit the poor ; for it does not attempt to remove the root of the evil. It cannot really benefit the rich ; for to give a trifle out of much superfluous wealth is no very valuable moral training, especially for boys who regard all such subscriptions as a necessary tax, to be extracted, if possible, from the parental purse. How different might it be if Eton boys had been invited to consider the true source of their parents' wealth : if the proposition had been set nakedly before them : 'What is the meaning of having—say—ten thousand a

year ? ' " And they are invited to " ponder the question why they and their parents are fed and clothed without being compelled to work for their own living." Now, what are the facts ?

The Mission, the first I believe of its kind, was started somewhere about the 'seventies, in order to identify Eton with some good work in the world. It formed a wholesome and sympathetic tie between the sons of the rich and the poor of Hackney Wick, which tie was kept alive by many of us, after we had left school, by periodic visits to the Mission, either for the day, or for a longer time. Clubs were started, where the old Etonian could meet his poorer brother on terms of friendship and equality ; cricket, football, rowing, concerts, lectures, and social evenings were organised, narrowing the gulf between class and class, and enabling the one to understand the humbler conditions of life, and the other to enjoy a brighter existence, and with this work the name of C. Granville Kekewich will always be identified. For a long period he lived at Hackney Wick in a room at 2s. 6d. a week, cooking his own food, and working among the poor. On Sundays he would take boating parties to church, during which, it must be confessed, they generally slept, and then for excursions on the river, each one bringing his own food, thereby converting the Sabbath

into a day of rational recreation from one of mischievous loafing.

It is more true to say that no very great attention was paid at Eton to the demand for subscriptions, since most of the money was found by Old Etonians, but "I can testify," says Mr Kekewich, "to the very great interest which the then Etonians, and those who had recently left Eton, paid to the Mission, and the pride which was obviously felt in the School at being associated with so big a work as being in charge of 6000 people on the outskirts of the East End, who up to that time were uncared for, religiously or socially. In the early days the work was too rough for present Etonians to take any active part, but when matters became more organised, boys continually came from Eton for the day, or went to Hackney Wick during the holidays." In like manner M. S. Pilkington, R. C. Dimsdale, Gilbert Johnstone, Algernon Lawley, R. White, and many others did splendid work. Mr. Carter, our hard-working founder, now Archbishop of Cape Town, could have told "O. E." whether this kind of thing benefitted the poor, and I will maintain that for an Eton boy an ounce of spontaneous good-fellowship was worth a pound of self-conscious pondering over wire-drawn theories. If you take it in at the pores when you are young, it stays with you

better. It is just the learning which is not book-learning at Eton which makes Eton what it is. It was in the 'seventies that there was a great movement among the upper classes to try and understand the poor, and help them in a practical way, and it was by this same impulse, of which the Eton Mission was one of the fruits, that other Etonians, such as James Adderley, J. E. K. Studd, and many others did work in other directions. It was better than folding the hands and pondering on the true inwardness of ten thousand a year, and I can assure "O. E." that it was better fun. He does not suggest, by the way, what you should do for your neighbour when you have solved the knotty point to your satisfaction. "I should like balls infinitely better," said Caroline Bingley, "if they were carried on in a different manner; but there is something insufferably tedious in the usual process of such a meeting. It would sure be much more rational if conversation, instead of dancing, made the order of the day." "Much more rational, my dear Caroline, I dare say, but it would not be ne'er so much like a ball." Vegetarianism, and an exhaustive study of Carl Marx might be more virtuous, but it would not be ne'er so like Eton.

While combating "O. E.'s" view of Eton in the 'seventies, I am by no means asserting that the con-

dition of the School was as healthy as it might have been, or as it is now. Mr. Lyttelton has indicated the change with regard to the dress of the masters which has since taken place, but that change is only the outward and visible sign of a far more important and subtle revolution in the relations between the masters and the boys. Eton was then, as I have said, in a state of transition, and many of the masters were old and pedantic; in spirit they never doffed the white tie and the gown; the tall hat entered into their daily life and conduct; and, though some tutors were more accessible than others, there was not, generally speaking, that familiarity and cordial relationship which should exist between master and boy. I believe that it exists now, and the following incident will support that view.

I was sitting talking to one of the masters in his study on a Sunday, when, after a knock at the door, in came a small boy. He was perplexed by one of the Sunday Questions set by his division master—what it was I forget—and he had tried the usual sources of information, Bible dictionary, &c., in vain.

"Well," said the master, "I think you may find something about it in Stanley's *History of the Jews*, at any rate enough for Mr. ——. There, take it out

of that bottom shelf, and, look here! if I lend it to you, you are not to spill ink or jam on it, and when you've done with it, put it back where it came from."

"All right, sir; thank you so much."

And the boy marched off with the nicely bound volume under his arm, and I am sure he kept his word.

"Suppose he did spill jam on it?" I inquired.

"He knows me too well to do that," was the prompt and significant reply. Can we imagine Johnny Yonge, or "Judy" Durnford lending his library books in that fashion?

In our day the younger masters often played games with us, football and fives for instance, but the moment the black coat and white shirt were assumed, they became dons once more, and you felt they were the human conduit pipes through which tasks and poenas descended on you, and therefore I have mentioned the above incident, which, like a little cloud, shows the direction of the otherwise invisible wind.

We are proud of our School, and justly so; indeed, there are few of us who, if we consider ourselves carefully, cannot derive some good instinct, or some valuable talent or gift, which has sprouted in our nursery garden at Eton. We may not have been

fine scholars, we may not have been foremost on the field or river, but the connections formed, and the lifelong friendships begun in the shadow of the "antique towers which crown the watery glade," have in most cases made an indelible impression on the growing character, the examples of "playing the game" giving us a natural bent towards straight dealing in after life, and the instinctive good taste which is due more to our upbringing than to any conscious effort of our own. As William Cowper said in his "Tirocinium," that sweeping attack on the public schools of his day:

> "Few boys are born with talents that excel,
> But all are capable of living well."

The training at Eton had its defects, some of which I have endeavoured to point out, but it seems to have been eminently suitable for the average English gentleman. A glance at the Eton School lists for the 'seventies will show that few, very few, of the boys failed to play an honourable, if not distinguished, part in after life.

One thing is notable. It is rare to find an Etonian who does not look back upon his boyhood with unmitigated pleasure. It is often said that the sufferance of adversity is necessary to the formation of character, but I am by no means certain that a happy

school life, in which a tendency towards right action is absorbed through the pores, is not as efficacious. Virtue may be better taught by kindness than by severity, and when the man of middle age, in looking back upon his youth, selects the Eton period as the happiest, it is a sign that there was nothing very serious the matter with the School.

I admit that we might have been better taught: we might have been able to pass subsequent examinations with greater ease—for our learning amounted only to a smattering of many subjects—but I am not alone in refusing to accept examinations as the sole, or the best, test of a man's capacity. It is only a convenient one, and is no test whatever of his character in the larger sense. The "plough" is sometimes the precursor of future fertility. The worst of the examination system is that it makes no attempt at discrimination between the various classes of mind upon which it is set to act. It aims at a certain standard, to which all must attain, and, if competitive and applied at an early age, at classifying mental precocity. The brains of many youths develop slowly, and their full powers do not blossom till a later date. Very often the boy is *not* father to the man, and you cannot tell how he will turn out. "What an edifying story it would be," says Sir Godfrey

Lagden in a recent article in the *Nineteenth Century* on Public Schools, "if a group of head masters could be induced to relate in one record their lifelong experiences of the surprises they had encountered in respect of those pupils who failed strangely to justify promise, and those who advanced unexpectedly after hanging back to a late moment." Who would have thought that the boy with ink on his collar and a furry hat, the ill-regulated little "scug," who was always late for school, and who never did anything at the right moment, would now be one of the King's most trusted Ambassadors abroad?

It is almost a truism to suggest at this time of day that the mere absorption of facts in the memory for a sufficient time to answer questions when asked is not the be-all and end-all of education, and yet examinations seem to hold their own as the only way of finding out a man's mental capacity. "No man," says old Selden, "is wiser for his learning; it may administer Matter to work upon, but Wit and Wisdom are born with a Man. Most Men's learning is nothing but history duly taken up." Sound judgment and a very large memory very rarely go together. Therefore, we need not be specially concerned if it be the fact that Etonians find a difficulty in passing examinations. "Some minds," Walter

Bagehot tells us, "learn most when they seem to learn least. A certain placid, unconscious, equable intaking of knowledge suits them, and alone suits them," and it is very often that these unconscious reflective natures become more successful in after life than the obviously intelligent pupils; hence the easy-going smattering of many subjects which Eton gave us in the 'seventies may have been, and probably was, as good in the long run as a more thorough grounding.

When an old boy of a speculative turn of mind revisits Eton, and, with a memory quickened by the scenes now unpeopled by his fellows, tries to reconstruct and formulate the essence which makes Eton what it is, he will find it is not wealth, neither is it birth, neither is it numbers. Probably he will find it is character in its widest sense, and of a fine distillation. He will find that, in spite of a not over-industrious youth, spent in careless enjoyment, and in receiving that "general and delicate impression which the early study of the Classics insensibly leaves on a nice and sensitive mind"—a somewhat dilettante education no doubt—the Etonian has somehow settled down to the strenuous work of the world with the singleness of aim which one would naturally associate with a harder training. This easy-going, happy-go-lucky school life has not destroyed his grit;

it has started him in his career in a spirit of genial cheerfulness. It is rare to find him a despondent, or a cynic. "A merry heart doeth good like medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones." When he begins to realise his abysmal ignorance in the presence of a well-stored intellect, he goes home with a smile and makes up for lost time, and sometimes he discovers that mature study more than outweighs early cramming in the end.

One of the faults of our public school education is that it strives "to compel boys to a distinct mastery of that which they do not wish to learn." Of course a "distinct mastery" of something is desirable, and indeed a necessity, and there are some boys in whom there is a rooted disinclination to learn anything; but the attempts to find out the mental leaning of the boy, his particular aptitude, and to follow up and encourage that aptitude, are at present somewhat feeble. Let us grant that the study of the Classics, bringing with it familiarity with the noblest passages of Greek and Latin authors, is the best education in the world, I question, not without hesitation of course, whether a better familiarity might not more easily be attained without recourse to those intolerable "derivations," that tedious dictionary, and that dull grammar. No doubt the quicker ones take all

this in their stride, but the slow may well exclaim with Sir Walter Scott :

> "You call this education, do you not?
> Why, 'tis the forced march of a herd of bullocks
> Before a shouting drover. The glad van
> Move on at ease, and pause a while to snatch
> A passing morsel from the dewy greensward,
> While all the blows, the oaths, the indignation,
> Fall on the croupe of the ill-fated laggard
> That cripples in the rear."
>
> OLD PLAY.

I am aware that this is rank heresy, but I venture to ask what happens to the Classics in after life when learnt in the above way by the average man? How many of us retain them as a predominant portion of our mental equipment? The melancholy fact remains that a classical quotation, unless commonly trite, falls upon the ears of an educated assembly uncomprehended. It will not take in the House of Commons. We no longer write and speak with the measured pomp of Gibbon and his time, but we educate our sons according to the same eighteenth-century plan, and we fall to wondering why our scholarship has not sunk in deeper. The reason is that, through this cumbrous system of teaching, the Classics fail to interest the modern boy. They did interest the eighteenth-century boy, because there was nothing of equal or greater importance that he could learn.

The mass of human knowledge has increased since then. The modern boy is quick enough and intelligent enough, but he has failed to learn the language with speed and ease; he has not gained that familiarity which would tempt him to keep them up in after life, and even the very look of the words recall his early struggles. It was Milton who told us that "we do amiss to spend seven or eight years merely in scraping together so much miserable Latin and Greek as might be learned otherwise easily and delightfully in one year." And we have not yet taken his advice.

There was a curious institution outside the ordinary curriculum called "Private Business," which might have been productive of much good. It was a kind of class held once a week in pupil-room in any subject which the tutor chose. Our knowledge of history being sadly deficient, my tutor, quite rightly, chose that subject; but interesting history books were not available in those days, and we had to be content with various Cambridge "Epochs of History," fit no doubt for people going in for a degree, but quite unsuitable for boys whose ideas on the subject were chiefly shaped by Sir Walter Scott and Harrison Ainsworth. I well remember the puzzledom occasioned by the complicated evolutions of the Thirty

Years' War, and the exploits of Wallenstein being rudely interrupted by the advent of various extraneous bodies dropped from above by lower boys, who varied the pursuit of passage football by utilising a ventilator in the corner of the room for the purpose. Doubtless "Private" was originally devised to cement the relation between tutor and pupil by the common study of interesting subjects in addition to school work, and, if wisely carried out, might be capable of being developed into a vehicle of much instruction imparted in an easy way. I believe it has been increased in value of late years, but for my part I never think of Frederick the Great without remembering with a shudder those very dry "Epochs."

One advantage, however, our school training gives us. There are few things in conduct that an Etonian should have to learn after he leaves school. Book-learning may be had at a price with much labour, but it is not always the successful examinee who can sway his fellow-men, or hold a position of responsibility in the world. This Etonians certainly have done, though in saying so I should be the last to disparage other schools. One is naturally apt to mark the achievements of one's own schoolfellows, therefore, nothing said here is to be taken as a comparison with other schools.

What is the Eton spirit? It has been observed that Eton boys, so soon as they leave school, become men of the world almost at once. They seem to acquire without further training what Matthew Arnold calls "that superior confidence, spirit, and style which constitute a real privilege, a real engine of command."

Not long ago a South American, wishing to enter his son's name at Eton, had an interview with one of the House-masters. There was no vacancy at the House, but the master asked him what made him choose Eton as a school for his son. "Well," he replied, "I have travelled a great deal, and have visited most of the British Empire, and whenever I have seen a man in a responsible position and in authority over other people, I have generally made inquiries as to his education, and I have been struck with the fact that a large number of such men come from this place."

Whether this is due to the system of self-government, which is happily in force as a traditional part of school life, or the feeling of pride at having been at Eton acting as a conscious factor in removing the shyness of a young man entering the world, it is difficult to say, but he does carry with him an assurance which often stands him in good stead. This

pride, when pushed to excess, always becomes an offence to other people, and is justly characterised as "Eton swagger." It is not unlike the attitude of many Englishmen abroad, who are never tired of insisting on the superiority of England over other nations, a form of blatant patriotism which naturally annoys our continental friends. I once heard an Etonian declare in a mixed company, and in the house of an old Harrovian too, that, in his opinion, no one could be a gentleman unless he was either an Etonian or a sportsman. This was, of course, an extreme case, but it illustrates the wrong side of school patriotism, which is not uncommon. I remember a writer in the *Times* once saying, when dealing with patriotism, that because a man loves his mother best, and she happens to be the best of mothers, he does not necessarily hate other women, "for the love of his own mother makes him aware of the mother in all women, and heightens his reverence for them."

But although this pride and enthusiasm occasionally outsteps the bounds of decency and good taste, the thing itself is one of our most precious assets, and is a bond of sympathy and union between Etonians all over the world. I suppose there is no place too remote, no climate too inhospitable, no society too limited, where past members of the school, on the terms

of equality which the brotherhood of Eton gives, from the Governor-General to the junior subaltern, have not managed to foregather on the Fourth of June, feel their hearts beat faster over the memories of their boyhood, recount the old japes and stories of their day with pardonable exaggeration, fight their battles over again on field and river, and join in singing William Johnson's "Boating Song," with one common wish towards their old School, which is expressed in the two short words,

"Floreat Etona."

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